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IBN 'ARABI'S THEORY OF THE PERFECT MAN
AND ITS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
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BY

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INTRODUCTION

Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240) is without doubt the most important and the most influential thinker in later Islamic intellectual history. His mystical philosophy, later labeled the doctrine of "unity of existence" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), dominated all the cultural spheres of the later Muslim world. His influence is so penetrating that it is impossible to understand the history of Islamic thought after the thirteenth century without a good understanding of Ibn 'Arabī. Especially in the Sunni world, where rational theology (*kalām*) suffered gradual ossification and "Hellenistic" philosophy (*falsafa*) disappeared, it is not an exaggeration to say that Ibn 'Arabī's thought became the only theology and philosophy. Also in Shi'ite Iran, where theology and philosophy continued to be cultivated, the influence of Ibn 'Arabī is conspicuous. His thought has been firmly integrated into Shi'ite theology since Ḥaydar Āmulī and Ibn Abī Jumhūr, and also it is one of the main sources of Shi'ite philosophical tradition as represented by Mullā Ṣadrā. Even the field of poetry, traditionally the most beloved form of expression of Sufism, could not escape Ibn 'Arabī's prevailing influence. Not only did many Sufi poets versify his philosophy, but also the poems of the great masters of Sufism, Ibn Fāriḍ and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, were interpreted by later commentators according to the philosophy of Ibn 'Arabī.

In addition to being an important and influential thinker, Ibn 'Arabī has been considered the most difficult thinker Islam ever pro-

duced. His thought remains ever enigmatic in spite of the multitude of studies produced by generations of Muslim and Western scholars devoted to elucidating his thought. The efforts to find a coherent system in his enormous body of works started already with Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī, his most able disciple. Here I shall review important works on Ibn ʿArabī in Western languages. The two pioneering works were written by the prominent scholars, H. S. Nyberg and M. Asín Palacios. The former edited three short but important treatises of Ibn ʿArabī in his *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-ʿArabī*¹ and attached a valuable and illuminating introduction to it. The latter, in the *Islam cristianizado*² gave a full and detailed account of Ibn ʿArabī's life, and a summary of his mystico-ethical thought. Both scholars, with their vast learning, tried to trace the origins of Ibn ʿArabī's thought in various traditions of pre-Islamic and Islamic thought. Nyberg's work still remains the best comparative study of Ibn ʿArabī's philosophy. Strangely enough, however, neither scholar paid due attention to the most mature work of Ibn ʿArabī, the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Furthermore, Nyberg, while limiting his scope to the elucidation of the three treatises he edited, made little use of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*. Asín Palacios, on the other hand, curiously avoided any analysis of Ibn ʿArabī's metaphysics in his book.

R. A. Nicholson, a profound scholar in the field of Islamic mysticism, summarized in a masterly manner the metaphysical system of the

¹H. S. Nyberg, *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-ʿArabī* (Leiden, 1919). It contains *Inshāʾ al-Dawāʾir*, *ʿUqlat al-Mustawfiz*, and *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīya fī Iṣlāḥ al-Mamlaka al-Insānīya*.

²Miguel Asín Palacios, *El Islam cristianizado: estudio del "sufismo" a través de las obras de Abenarabi de Murcia* (Madrid, 1931).

waḥdat al-wujūd of Jīlī in his *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*,³ however, he gave only a brief and preliminary study of Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*,⁴ His student, A. E. Affifi, who edited and commented upon the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, provided a clear and systematical account of Ibn 'Arabī's entire thought in *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Dīn Ibnul 'Arabī*,⁵ a work based mainly on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiya*. Although his book is still the best general introduction to Ibn 'Arabī, it suffers from over-systematization; also the comparative study between Ibn 'Arabī and the preceding Pre-Islamic and Islamic thinkers, among whom he attempted to find Ibn 'Arabī's sources, remains too sketchy and superficial.

More recently, H. Corbin's *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabī*⁶ and T. Izutsu's *Sufism and Taoism*⁷ have been the most significant contributions to Ibn 'Arabī studies. Corbin, mainly interested in Iranian metaphysical tradition (particularly in the works of Suhrawardī,) discovered the heritage of Ibn 'Arabī assimilated in this tradition. Although Ibn 'Arabī himself does not belong to Iranian tradition, his similarity to it struck Corbin, and prompted him to study the Shaykh al-Akbar. Corbin's book is full of deep insights and interesting and stimulating observations. However, his approach through phe-

³R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge, 1921).

⁴*Idem*, "Some Notes on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*," in his *Studies*, pp. 149-161.

⁵A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Dīn Ibnul 'Arabī* (Cambridge, 1939).

⁶H. Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabī*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1976). The book is first published in 1958.

⁷Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Tokyo, 1983). This is a revised edition of his *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, 1966-67).

nomenology and Jungian psychology is fundamentally ahistorical; therefore, it is no wonder that the consideration of the historical background of Ibn 'Arabī's thought is totally missing in his book. T. Izutsu, however, who is close to Corbin in his methodology and interest, stoically limited his study to the thorough analysis of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. In its depth of textual interpretation, his book surpasses all the previous works, but he avoids using any other works of Ibn 'Arabī, nor does he try to locate Ibn 'Arabī in the history of Islamic thought.

On the whole, it can be said that few studies have been done hitherto to evaluate Ibn 'Arabī's thought in relation to early Islamic intellectual traditions. Therefore, while I limit myself to one of Ibn 'Arabī's most celebrated theories, that is, the theory of the Perfect Man, I try to examine Ibn 'Arabī's thought in historical perspective. Although he is in many ways an original figure in the intellectual history of Islam, his thought is, nevertheless, firmly rooted in Islamic traditions. Otherwise he would never have been so widely and enthusiastically accepted by later Sufis. Furthermore, his originality can be properly appreciated only in comparison with the heritage he freely made use of, especially that of early Sufism.

One of the reasons of Ibn 'Arabī's difficulty for students of his thought is his elusive style. He is neither a systematic writer like Ghazzālī, who presents his arguments in a well-arranged order, nor a text-book writer like Qushayrī and Kalābādhī. As a true mystic, he writes under inspiration, and ideas upon ideas gush out from his pen like water from a spring. The simple systematization of such a work does not do full justice to him. Once it is systematized, it loses its dynamics and becomes a static scholastic mysticism. On the other hand,

the difficulty he poses is essentially different from that of early mystics like Ḥallāj. In Ḥallāj, every passage, every sentence is enigmatic. His words are, in reality, ecstatic utterances (*shaḥīyāt*) which can be only understood experientially, while in Ibn ʿArabī each passage is, in most cases, clear enough, once one is accustomed to his technical terms. One can find in every passage an original and interesting idea, or a surprising interpretation of the Qur'an, the *ḥadīth*, theological doctrines, or sayings of early Sufi masters. Nevertheless, as a whole, he manages to remain as obscure as ever. It is because his arguments proceed mainly through association, not through logical structure. In this sense, his writings can be compared to the Persian *ghazal*, whose verse (*bayt*) is like a beautiful pearl. Each one, however, is generally regarded as being loosely strung together with a thread of association. For instance, in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Ibn ʿArabī argues that every saint receives esoteric knowledge from the seal of the saints; therefore, messengers *qua* saints receive it from this seal, although the latter must follow the Law brought by the former. Thus, the seal is lower than messengers in one aspect and higher in another. His argument so far is very clear. However, he tries to explain the point in the following manner:

What we have maintained here is supported by what appeared in our *sharīʿa*, i.e., the superiority of ʿUmar's judgement [over the Prophet and Abū Bakr] in respect of the prisoners taken at Badr, and the matter of the pollination of palms. It is not necessary for one who is perfect to be superior in everything and at every level. Men [i.e., sufis] regarded only the superiority in the degrees of knowledge of God. This is their [sole] object of desire. As for phenomenal things, their minds are not concerned with them.⁸

⁸Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed. Abū al-ʿAlā ʿAfīfī (Cairo, 1946), pp. 62-63.

The above passage, when it is regarded independently from the context, is clear, but how does it explain the previous point? In order to explain the *prima facie* audacious statement that the seal is higher than messengers in one aspect, Ibn 'Arabi gives us two examples in which the Prophet made inferior judgements as compared to those who were not prophets. In the latter example of the pollination of palms, the Prophet tells some palm cultivators that they are more knowledgeable in worldly affairs (than he is.) This saying of the Prophet prompts Ibn 'Arabi to make an interesting remark on the meaning of perfection in knowledge. The remark is pertinent as an interpretation of the *ḥadīth*, but impertinent in the whole context, because the esoteric knowledge which messengers receive from the seal is exactly concerned with God, not with phenomenal things.

In view of these characteristics of Ibn 'Arabi's thought, an analysis of recurring motifs in his vast body of writings would be most useful. In the history of Medieval philosophy, this method of motif analysis is applied in a masterly manner by Alexander Altmann in "The Delphic Maxim in Medieval Islam and Judaism."⁹ although his main interest is in Jewish philosophy. In the present study, I choose three predominant motifs used by Ibn 'Arabi in his discussion of the Perfect Man; Adam created in the image of God; the correspondences of the microcosm and the macrocosm; and the motif of Sufi saints as the supreme example of the Perfect Man in contrast with the Animal Man. Each motif has a long history in Pre-Islamic and Islamic thought. However, in this study, we have limited ourselves to the most representative treatments of these

⁹Alexander Altmann, "The Delphic Maxim in Medieval Islam and Judaism," in Altmann, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Plainview, N. Y., 1969), pp. 1-40.

motifs in Islamic thought, except for the first motif of Adam created in the image of God, in which the Judeo-Christian background is obvious and cannot be neglected.

CHAPTER I
THEOLOGY OF THE IMAGE OF GOD

Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy of man is characterized by the concept of the "Perfect Man" symbolized by Adam, whom God created in His image as His vicegerent on earth. The predominant feature of his anthropology is anthropocentrism founded on ontology. He uses the themes and motives familiar to early Sufism. Indeed, anthropocentrism itself is nothing new not only in Islam, but also in the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, Ibn 'Arabī provided anthropocentrism with a philosophical basis, and reinterpreted old Biblical and Qur'anic motives through this metaphysics, and gave new meanings to these age-old motives. Curiously enough, his anthropology shows striking similarities to that of the early Christian fathers, who also interpreted Biblical myths through Hellenistic philosophy and offered the Christian belief a philosophical foundation. In this chapter, we first examine the Pre-Islamic background of anthropocentrism and the theology of the image developed in Judeo-Christian traditions, then we discuss the theology of the image in early Sufism before Ibn 'Arabī, namely Ḥallāj, and Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī, who used Ḥallājīan sources and developed his idea, and Ghazzālī, who is closest to Ibn 'Arabī, among the earlier Sufis in respect of the theology of the image.

Pre-Islamic Tradition

The Old Testament

Anthropocentrism is clearly stated in the Old Testament, namely in the Genesis. All creatures are created for the sake of man; man is given dominion over all creatures.¹ The fact that man is the ultimate aim of God's creation is further strengthened by the statement that God created Adam in His image.² The meaning of this statement has puzzled generations of theologians both in Judaism and Christianity, and numerous explanations have been offered.³ Edmund Schlink sums up the problems surrounding the *Imago Dei* motif in the following way.⁴

1. In what lies the commonness of the image?
2. Who has the commonness of the image? and who is the image of God?

In the context of the Old Testament, the answer to the first question remains obscure. The correspondences between man and God are never explicitly stated. Rather, the distance between the creature and the Creator remains in the foreground. As for the second question, it is generally agreed that Adam here symbolizes man in general, and the commonness of the image remains true even after the fall of Adam.⁵

¹Gen. 1, 26. 28-30.

²Gen. 1, 26-27.

³The extensive bibliography on this subject is given in Leo Scheffczyk (ed.) *Der Mensch als Bild Gottes* (Darmstadt, 1969), pp. 526-538.

⁴Edmund Schlink, "Die Biblische Lehre vom Ebenbilde Gottes," in *Der Mensch als Bild Gottes*, pp. 88-89.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 92-94.

In later Judaism, there appeared the ethico-anthropological interpretation of the motif.⁶ According to individual conduct and the degree of his conformity with the Law, man either preserves or loses the commonness of the image. To have the same image with God means to become worthy of His image. But it should be noted that at this stage there is no dualism of the body and soul. This radical dualism is first introduced into Judeo-Christian tradition by Gnosticism with its famous *Anthropos* myth.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism introduced several important ideas for the interpretation of the *Imago Dei* motif. Here we enumerate these ideas, following Schwanz's analysis.⁷

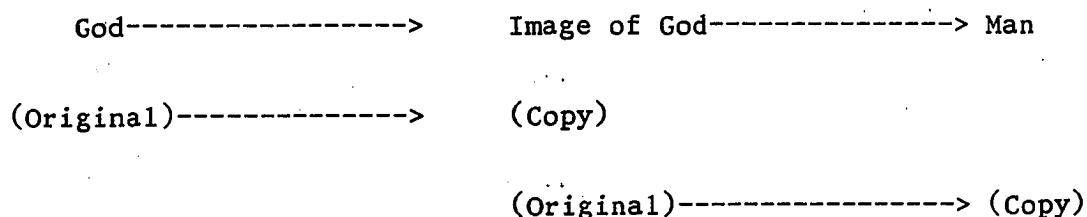
1. The concept of the image is applied to the divine being, which is distinguished from the absolute Godhead. This divine being, which is called *Anthropos*, *Sophia*, or *Logos*, is characterized as the Image of God.
2. The concept of the image expresses both sameness and difference from the absolute Godhead. The relation between them is explained through the Neo-Platonic emanation theory.
3. The theory of revelation and soteriology are bound with the concept of the image. The revelation is to know that the inner part of man, man's self, has the divine origin, and by this knowledge man can achieve salvation.

⁶For the interpretations of the *Imago Dei* motif in later Judaism, see J. Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen. 1, 26 f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen, 1960), pp. 15-51.

⁷Peter Schwanz, *Imago Dei als christologisch-anthropologisches Problem in der Geschichte der Alten Kirche von Paulus bis Clemens von Alexandria* (Halle, 1970), pp. 21-26.

4. The soul and the body are clearly divided. The latter belongs to the physical universe. It is a prison for the former. The physical universe is created by the evil Demiurgos, and it is evil. The soul comes from God, but it is not in the true sense of the word created, rather it emanates from God.
5. The term "image" is sometimes applied to the inner part of man. Thus this term has at the same time the meaning of the model and the copy.

We can schematize the Gnostic theory of the image in the following way⁸:



Philo of Alexandria

Among the pre-Islamic interpretations of the *Imago Dei* motif, that of Philo is the most interesting and influential.⁹ Wolfson considers him the founder of all the later medieval religious philosophies in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.¹⁰ Although his importance is over-exaggerated,

⁸This scheme is based on that of Schwanz, *Imago Dei*, p. 20. However, it is slightly modified here.

⁹For the *Imago Dei* motif in Philo, the most extensive work is Thomas H. Tobin, *Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation*. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monographs, No. 12 (Washington, D.C., 1983). Also see E. Brehier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie*, (Paris, 1925), pp. 121-26; Jervel, *Imago Dei*, pp. 52-70; A. M. Mazzanti, "L'aggettivo *methorios* e la doppia creazione dell'uomo in Filone de Alessandria," in Ugo Bianchi (ed.) *La 'doppia creazione' dell'uomo negli Alessandrini, nei Cappadoci e nella gnosi* (Roma, 1978), pp. 27-42.

¹⁰H.A. Wolfson, *Philo. Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1948).

there is no doubt that his theory of the image in his exegesis of the Genesis influenced many Patristic philosophers such as Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. The philosophy of Philo is labeled sometimes as Middle Platonism, sometimes as Stoicism. There is a certain similarity between him and Gnosticism, especially in respect of the doctrine of the image.

Philo's speculation on the image of God starts with the distinction between man created in the image of God and man formed from the clay, based on the two different descriptions of the creation in the Genesis. The former, who is called the divine man (*anthropos theou*) is interpreted in two ways. First it is the human intelligence which guides the soul and governs the body like God. Secondly it is stated that the man created in the image of God is an idea, genus, or seal (*sphragis*,) intelligible, incorporeal, neither male nor female, incorruptible by nature. He is the heavenly Adam as compared to the earthly Adam formed from the earth.

Further, Philo connects the concept of the image with his famous *Logos* doctrine. However, the precise relation of the *Logos* to the heavenly Adam is also ambiguous. In one place, he is identified with the *Logos*. In other places, the *Logos* is the image of God, and the ideal man (the heavenly Adam) is the image of the *Logos*, that is, the image of the image of God.

It is strange that, when Philo identified the heavenly Adam with the *Logos*, he did not think that the earthly Adam was created according to the *Logos*, i.e., the image of God. In Philo, the earthly man is always thought to be formed from the clay; the human intellect is created in the image of God, but man as such is never thought to be created in His image. Also it is noteworthy that in some places Philo states that the

universe is created in the image of the *Logos*, that is, it is the image of the image of God.¹¹

Another contribution of Philo to the later anthropology is his clear formulation of the double nature of man. It is the earthly man whom he refers to as the possessor of the double nature.

The formation of the individual man, the object of sense, is a composite one made up of earthly substance and of Divine breath: for it says that the body was made through the Artificer taking clay and moulding out of it a human form, but that the soul was originated from nothing created whatever, but from the Father and Ruler of all; for that which He breathed in was nothing else than a Divine breath . . . Hence it may with propriety be said that man is the borderland (*methorios*) between mortal and immortal nature, partaking of each so far as is needful, and that he was created at once mortal and immortal, mortal in respect of the body, but in respect of the thought (*dianoia*) immortal.¹²

Early Christianity

The theology of the image in early Christianity was greatly influenced both by Gnosticism and Philo. But the important difference lies in Christology, which early Christian fathers incorporated into their theology.

According to St. Paul, the image of God is primarily Christ, and the *homo imago Dei* means that Christ is the archetype of man.¹³ Although man possesses the image of God potentially, this commonness of the image is only actualized through Christ. Thus the ethico-religious character comes to the foreground. Only the new man, the inner man who is reborn in Christ, can be, in reality, called the image of God. Here the term "image" is applied both to the Christ (model) and man (copy.)

¹¹David Winston, "Introduction," in Philo of Alexandria, *The Contemplative Life, The Giants and Selections* (Ramsey, N. Y., 1981), p. 23.

¹²Phil, *de opif.*, 135.

¹³For Saint Paul's interpretation of the image of God, see Schwanz, *Imago Dei*, pp. 17-57.

In the time of St. Paul, the Christian *Logos* doctrine had not yet been established. It is the early fathers who integrated the *Logos* doctrine into the theology of the image. Among them Irenaeus is considered the founder of the theology of the image.¹⁴ According to him, although Adam was created in the image of God, he lost this sameness of the image when he sinned and was expelled from Paradise. It is only through Christ, the *Logos*, the image of God *par excellence*, that man can regain the original sameness of the image. Here the soteriological aspect is predominant.

Here it is not the place to examine each Christian father who contributed to the development of the theology of the image, such as Origen,¹⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus,¹⁶ and Gregory of Nyssa.¹⁷ Therefore we summarize the following characteristics in their theory of the image:

1. God and His image are clearly distinguished. The former is the Father, and the latter Christ, the *Logos*.
2. Man is created in the Image, therefore he is not the image of God, rather he is the image of the image of God.
3. Like Philo, they emphasize the double nature of man. The inner man, or new man of St. Paul, is identified as the human soul, which is created in His image, while the body is formed from the earth. Discussing the doubleness of man in Gregory of Nazianzus,

¹⁴For Irenaeus' interpretation of the image of God, see Schwanz, pp. 117-143.

¹⁵For the theology of the image of God in Origen, the best work is H. Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origène* (Paris, 1955).

¹⁶For the anthropology of Gregory of Nazianzus, see Anna-Stina Ellverson, *The Dual Nature of Man, A Study in the Theological Anthropology of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Uppsala, 1981).

¹⁷For the theology of the image of God in Gregory of Nyssa, see R. Leys, *L'image de Dieu chez Saint Grégoire de Nysse* (Bruxelles-Paris, 1951).

Anna-Stina Ellverson writes as follows:

. . . man is formed of dust and spirit. He is a bit of earth to which the soul, an inbreathing of God, is joined . . . He is visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly, mortal and immortal, low and high. We find Gregory underlining the doubleness of man by way of contrast. Thanks to this doubleness man further might be said to belong to two different worlds or spheres, the material as well as the spiritual and heavenly. "I am small and great, lowly and high, mortal and immortal, earthly and heavenly. The one condition I share with this world below, the other with God, the one with flesh, the other with the spirit."¹⁸

4. According to Origen, the commonness of the image means the co-substantiality of all the intellects with God, because they perceive the same intelligibles. Thus the commonness of knowledge and the object of knowledge is the basis of the commonness of the image.
5. The image of God is also considered as a source of knowledge. Thanks to the sameness of the image, man's self-knowledge leads to the knowledge of God. Henri Crouzel explains this theory in Origen as follows:

"Puisque l'intelligence est une image intellectuelle de Dieu, par elle on peut connaître quelque chose de la nature de la divinité." Il suffit pour cela que l'esprit se regarde lui-même et y constate le "désir de pitié et de communion avec Dieu."¹⁹

In this way, the Delphic maxim, "know yourself!" is combined with the theology of the image.

The Homo Imago Dei Motif in Sufism

The *ḥadīth*, "God created Adam in His image," appears in some variants in *ḥadīth* collections.²⁰ The apparent anthropomorphic connotation

¹⁸Ellverson, p. 17.

¹⁹Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de Dieu*, p. 174.

²⁰A. J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*. 7 vols. (Leiden, 1936-1969,) 3:438.

of this *ḥadīth* provoked some controversies, and theologians made efforts to explain away the *ḥadīth* by interpreting the third person pronoun of "his image" as someone other than God.²¹ Also this *ḥadīth* is used by Sufis for the affirmation of the close affinity existing between God and man. The reason why this *ḥadīth* had been so much discussed by theologians and Sufis was not merely that it hints at anthropomorphism. There are clearer anthropomorphic sayings in the Qur'an such as "The hand of God" and "The face of God." Also there are anthropomorphic *ḥadīths*, such as "I saw God in the most beautiful shape . . ."²² But the true reason of the popularity of this *ḥadīth* seems to be the introduction of the theology of the image so prevalent in early Christianity into Islam. When this *ḥadīth* was introduced into Islam from the Old Testament, it was more plausible to think that the whole tradition of the interpretation of this verse entered Islam. Indeed, the Christian influence concerning the *imago Dei* motif can be clearly

²¹According to information kindly provided by Professor Daniel Gimaret in personal correspondence (January 6, 1986) the possessive pronoun refers either: (1) to Adam himself, the *ḥadīth* meaning that (for example) God gave him at once his definitive outline as an adult without making him pass through the different steps of pregnancy, childhood, etc. This was especially the position of Abu Sulayman al-Khattābī (d. 388/998) according to Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqī's *K. Al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt* (Cairo, 1358/1939), p. 290. See also Juwaynī, *K. al-Irshād*, ed. Luciani (Paris, 1938), Arabic text, p. 93; *idem*, *al-Shāmil fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Alexandria, 1969), p. 560; or (2) to some person previously mentioned in the *ḥadīth*. According to some versions of this *ḥadīth*, when the Prophet saw a man striking another in the face, he said, "Don't strike him, for God created Adam in his [i.e., that man's] shape." This was the view upheld especially by Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/924,) *K. al-Tawḥīd* (Cairo, 1968), pp. 36-38. See also Juwaynī, *Irshād*, p. 93; *idem*, *Shāmil*, p. 560. See also W. Montgomery Watt, "Created in His Image: A Study in Islamic Theology," *Glasgow University Oriental Society Transactions* 17 (1961) :38-49.

²²For the source and the use of this *ḥadīth* in Sufism, see H. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, new enlarged. ed. (Leiden, 1976), pp. 445-446.

seen in the interpretation of some of the extreme Shi'a sects, in which Adam is said to be created by Christ in his (Christ's) image.²³

In any case, anthropocentrism, which is the background of this motif, is not lacking in Islam from the beginning. In the Qur'an it is stated that man is given the dominion over all things which exist in the heaven and on earth, and God created Adam as the vicegerent of God on earth and He taught him all the names, and ordered angels to prostrate to Adam. These Qur'anic verses are frequently quoted by Sufis to explain the *imago Dei ḥadīth*.

The most remarkable explanation of this *ḥadīth* in early Sufism is that of Shiblī, reported by Ghazzālī in the *Imlā'*.²⁴ According to Shiblī, Adam was created according to God's Names and Attributes, not according to His Essence. This is a new Islamic development in the history of the theology of the image, and it is to become the most dominant interpretation in Sufism. The distinction between the Essence and the Names or Attributes is taken from Islamic theology. The Names and Attributes occupy that intermediate position between the absolute God-head and the creature, corresponding to the *Logos* of Philo and the Christian fathers.

As an example of the early speculation on the *imago Dei* motif in Sufism, we first examine the theory of Ḥallāj. Then Ruzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī is discussed as a successor of Ḥallājīan Sufism. Then, Ghazzālī's interpretation of the *imago Dei ḥadīth* is treated in detail.

²³Watt, "Created in His Image," p. 45.

²⁴Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Al-Ghazzālī, *Kitāb al-Imlā' fī ishkālāt al-Iḥyā'* in the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 5 vols. (Cairo, n.d.), 5:32. Hereafter cited as *Imlā'*.

Ḥallāj

Affifi already pointed out that Ḥallāj's thought influenced Ibn 'Arabī greatly, and enumerated nine points of similarity between them.²⁵ However, as Affifi himself admits, Ḥallāj belongs to a different class of mystics from that to which Ibn 'Arabī belongs. And most of the similarities which Affifi mentions are not necessarily from Ḥallāj. For instance, the ideas of the phenomenal world as a veil of the Real or the unknowability of God or the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an can be found in many Sufi circles and some of the theological schools. Here I would like to concentrate on Ḥallāj's theory of Adam as created in His image.

Louis Massignon in his *magnum opus*, *La Passion de Ḥallāj*, spends six pages on a section entitled *l'image de Dieu*.²⁶ After having treated the origin of the *imago Dei ḥadīth* in its two versions, "in His image," and "in the image of the Merciful One," he discusses the various schools of interpretation, and includes Ḥallāj among those theologians who accepted only the first version and interpreted "his" as referring to Adam; "à son image-selon la forme même qu'Il avait préparée pour lui . . . Le type de cette image est donc en Dieu comme une pure forme intelligible, une et simple, intelligible, à la fois, pour Lui." Massignon uses in this point the quotation from Ḥallāj in Sulamī's *Tafsīr*.²⁷ Here the *imago Dei ḥadīth* is quoted and explained as follows: "i.e., in his image in which God formed (*ṣawwara*) him, and the best is his image."

²⁵Affifi, pp. 188-190.

²⁶Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Hussayn Ibu Mansūr Ḥallāj*, new ed. 4 vols. (Paris, 1975), 3:111-118.

²⁷The Arabic text of this passage appears in Louis Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, new ed. (Paris, 1968), p. 405.

However, the concept of the heavenly Adam and the correspondences between man and God are not lacking in Ḥallāj, although he does not found these doctrines on the *imago Dei ḥadīth*. He distinguishes two aspects in God: *lāhūt*, the transcendent, unattainable Godhead which makes atoms subsist, and *nāsūt*, the deified humanity. *Nāsūt* is the form assumed by the divine word before the creation: It is the clothes (*kiswa*) of the eternal witness (*shāhid al-qīdam*) who pledged the covenant. Thus, Adam symbolizes the *nāsūt* of God, or the Godhead in the clothes of humanity, especially in the event of the Covenant, and is also related to the eschatological figure of Jesus at the Last Judgment.²⁸ However, the relation between this "heavenly Adam," i.e., the *nāsūt* of God, and the earthly man, is not clear in Ḥallāj.

Also Ḥallāj's theory of *hūwa hūwa* (identity, sameness) suggests the supreme identification between man and God. This theory is preserved in the words of Daylamī and Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī (the former in Arabic, the latter in Arabic and Persian.)²⁹ This is not the place to examine this mystical exposé of Ḥallāj in detail. Only the brief summary will be given here. The first part treats the relation between God's Essence and His Attributes in a highly mythopoetic language. The underlying thought is that before the creation and in His aspect of Absoluteness, Attributes are neither separate from His Essence nor identical with it [the doctrine of the Ash'arites.] He knows his

²⁸Massignon, *La Passion*, 3:112-113.

²⁹Daylamī, *Kitāb 'Atf al-Alif al-Ma'lūf 'alā al-Lām al-Ma'tūf*, ed. J. C. Vadet (Cairo, 1962), pp. 26-28, Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt*, ed. H. Corbin, (Tehran, 1966), pp. 441-444. The Arabic version of the above work, *Manṭiq al-Asrār bi-Bayān al-Anwār* has not yet been published. This exposé is translated into French by Massignon, based on the text in Daylamī (Massignon, *La Passion*, 3:113-116.)

Attributes by knowing and looking at Himself. Each Attribute contains all the other Attributes. God relates to each Attribute and to the meaning of each Attribute by relating to Himself. Among these Attributes, that of Love is most prominent. (This is characteristically Hallājīan.) Finally God wishes to manifest His Attributes separately outside Himself.

Then God wanted to make these Attributes appear [starting] from Love in separateness (*infirād*), so that He could see them and speak to them. He looked at pre-eternity and created an image, which is His image and His Essence, because if God looks at a thing, He makes in it an image from Him, and that image will remain through eternity, and in that image will remain Knowledge, Power, Movement, Will and all [His] Attributes through eternity. When He manifests Himself eternally to a person (*shakhs*), He becomes identical (*hūwa hūwa*) with him, and He looked at that [person] for an aeon (*dahr*) of His eternity . . . He specified him with the attributes similar to those of His own action, attributes which He created from the meaning of manifestation (*zuhūr*) in that person whom He had created in His own image. Thus he [that person] became a creator (*khāliq*) and a nourisher (*rāziq*). He praised and glorified, and made the attributes and actions visible. In the like manner, he made substances and wonders visible and [God] brought him into His kingdom, and manifested Himself in him and from him.³⁰

Although it is difficult to translate Hallāj's mythopoetical language into systematical clear philosophical language, at least the following points can be remarked.

1. Although he uses expressions such as "creation" (*ibdā'*) or "manifestation" (*zuhūr*) of "image" and "person," he does not mention either Adam or man explicitly. "Image" or "person" can be well interpreted as "intellect" or "spirit."
2. "Existence *in concreto*" is not mentioned at all. Because there is no ontology, there is no distinction between the intelligible world and the physical universe, which is so common in Neo-Pla-

³⁰The translation is from the Persian version in Rūzbihān Baqlī, *Sharḥ*, pp. 443-44, which corresponds to the Arabic version in Daylamī, pp. 27-28.

tonism. Therefore, we cannot surely attribute concrete existence to the image or person.

3. The Divine Essence and the image are not clearly distinguished.

The image which God manifests is called both the image of God and the Essence of God. In the Judeo-Christian theology of the image, the image of God is an entity which is clearly distinguished from the Godhead, i.e., the Essence of God.

Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī

Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī is a Persian Sufi of the later twelfth century. He belongs to the tradition of love mystics, whom Corbin called the "fidèles d'amour."³¹ His book, *Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥīyāt* is famous for preserving the writings and sayings of Ḥallāj and interpreting Ḥallāj's often enigmatic thought. Therefore it is very helpful to examine his interpretation on the above exposé of Ḥallāj. In his commentary, "the person" is explicitly identified as Adam, and the *imago Dei ḥadīth* is appropriately quoted.

The amazing gnostic [Ḥallāj] says, 'He manifested Himself to a person, and became identical with him.' It means that God created Adam and dressed his creature with the clothes (*kis-wat*) of love (*khullat*) of creation. 'God created Adam in His own image.' [Ḥallāj says,] 'He looks at him for an aeon of His eternity,' so that He manifest Himself (*tajallī konad*) in him with His Essence and all His Attributes. 'He taught Adam all the names.' [2/31.] [Ḥallāj says,] 'He specifies him with the attributes similar to those Attributes [of Him,] i.e., characteristics (*nu'ūt*) and attribute[s], so that the light of His Essence appear in him, and so that He can make him perfect with all Attributes of His eternity. When he [this person, i.e., Adam] is endowed (*mutamakkin*) with the Might of God and His Majesty, he will possess all the Attributes of God. Through him, [God] manifests Himself to His creatures with all His Attributes, so that he becomes the

³¹See H. Corbin, "Quiétude et inquiétude de l'âme dans le soufisme de Rūzbehān Baqlī de Shīrāz," *Eranos Jahrbuch* 27 (1959):51-194; *idem.*, *En Islam Iranien*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1971-72), 3:9-146.

vicegerent of His kingdom and the model (*sunna*) of the guidance of His creation.³²

But this is not the only place where Rūzbihān Baqlī quotes the *imago Dei ḥadīth* in his interpretation of the sayings of Ḥallāj.

The second occurrence is in the commentary of the following sayings of Ḥallāj.

The visible world (*mulk*) and the invisible world (*malakūt*) are manifest (*paydā*) in the form of Adam and his descendants. He manifested Himself through His actions (*sanā'ī*) and His names, when His sovereignty (*ṣubuḥāt*) descended through the appearance of the visible world in (*nazd*) the Majestic Qur'an, for Power and Good Attributes (*ḥasanāt*) are His.³³

In the above quotation, the macrocosm-microcosm motif is hinted at.

Rūzbihān Baqlī's comment is as follows:

The two modes of creation from the Throne to the earth are manifest in the form of Adam, because he is a microcosm (*kawn aṣghar*.) Whoever sees Adam has seen [everything] from the Throne to the earth. "We will show them our signs in the horizons and in their souls," [41/53.] Through action (*fi'l*) He manifested Himself into non-existence (*bī-'adam*.) The universe appeared with all that exists in it of actions (*sanā'ī*.) He manifested Himself from Eternity through action (*fi'l*.) He made Adam appear with all [His] attributes. Concerning this, Muḥammad³⁴ said, 'God created Adam in His image,' that is in the image of the world (*kawn*), which issued from the action. And this happened when the visible world (*'ālam-i mulk*) and majestic witness (*shahādat-i kubrā*) appeared.³⁵

In the above interpretation, Rūzbihān Baqlī indicates that Adam was created in the image of the universe, thus he connects the *imago Dei ḥadīth* with the macrocosm-microcosm motif.

³²Rūzbihān Baqlī, *Sharḥ*, pp. 449-450.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 348.

³⁴Literally "the engraver of [the prayer], '(Say:) O God, master of the kingdom,' [3/26,] and the cream of [the *ḥadīth*], 'Muḥammad was not in the world of creation.'" Both refer to Muḥammad.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 349.

Besides these comments on the sayings of Ḥallāj, Rūzbihān Baqlī often quotes the *imago Dei ḥadīth* in his book *Sharḥ-e-Shaṭḥīyāt*. As compared to Ghazzālī, Rūzbihān Baqlī's handling of this *ḥadīth* lacks metaphysical and theological speculations, and represents the tradition of early Sufism more faithfully.

First of all, this *ḥadīth* is treated as one of the *shaṭḥīyāt* (ecstatic utterances) of the Prophet Muḥammad together with the *ḥadīth*, "I saw my Lord in the most beautiful shape." His comments on these *ḥadīth*, are as follows:

As for the meaning of the *ḥadīth*, "God created Adam in His image," it is a piece of information concerning the manifestation (*tajallī*) of the essence of [divine] unity ('ayn-i-jam') upon the essence of separation ('ayn-i tafriqa,) so that the lover be shaped with the attributes of the beloved. God manifested Himself to Adam through all His attributes; He brought out Adam [into existence] in the manner of the manifestation of all His attributes; He then manifested Himself from the mystery of his Essence upon his [Adam's] soul. Love appeared upon Adam as the attributes of Love [not as its essence.] God in His love made transcendence of His timeless attribute the primordial time for the sake of Adam.³⁶ And He dressed him [Adam] in his particular time with the mystery of His Essence in the sphere of His transcendence, so that from Eternity, he [Adam] became homochrome (*hamrang*) with Eternity. He [Adam] was eternal, not non-existence. He was [in reality] God, not Adam. And the *ḥadīth*, "I saw my Lord [in the most beautiful shape,]" [means that] God adorned [His] action with Eternity. The Light of His Essence was dressed with the Light of His Attributes. Then His Essence manifested Itself in His action, and His action became His Essence. He showed Himself to Muḥammad as Muḥammad. Muḥammad was His ornament. To own an attribute in His primordial state is not an unknown design to God. No substance of creation exists without the manifestation (*tajallī*) of primordial eternity. If you know that everything is He, the Eternal does not become the temporal, but He shows His shape in whichever way He wishes. He shows His eternal beauty to the lover in the mirror of His action, so that He makes his [i.e., lover's] existence in its entirety turn to [His attribute of] Love. This [i.e., to turn one's entire existence to Love] is the proper behavior (*sunnat*) for the lover toward the lover.³⁷

³⁶I omitted *rā* and *zamān* and read: "wa ḥaqq dar 'ishq tanzīh-i sīfat-i bī zamān zamān-i awwaliyat bar Ādam kard."

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 63.

The starting point of Rūzbihān Baqlī is the affirmation of both transcendence and immanence of God at the same time. The former is expressed as "absolute unity" (*tawḥīd*,) "essence of separation" (*ʿayn-i tafriqa*,) "the Mount Qāf of separation" (*Qāf-i tafrīd*,)³⁸ and it is related to Gnosis (*maʿrifa*.)³⁹ The latter is the divine epiphany (*tajallī*,) which is defined as the "stage of ambiguity" (*maqām-i iltibās*,) "essence of unity" (*ʿayn-i jamʿ*,)⁴⁰ and it is related to love (*maḥabba*, *ʿishq*.)⁴¹ In this stage, God manifests His Essence in His action and attributes, and shows Himself to the lover in the shape of the earthly beloved. The beloved is the mirror of the Godhead and is ultimately identified with God Himself.

If you have read the gilded book (*nāme-i muzawwar*,) you have understood in the lines of beauties of the creation the spelling of the symbol of "God created Adam in His shape." The beauties of the creation have the light of the [Divine] action. The complexion (*rang*) of Adam has the heritage of the beauty of the mine, and the intimacy of the lover has the heritage of the love of that Face. You read in "Adam" [of the above *ḥadīth*] "Adam" of the Qur'anic verse, "prostrate yourself [to Adam!]" [2/34.] The creature does not have these characteristics which man has, because man [lit. men] has the freshness (*ṭarawāt*) of the meaning of "I breathed in him my Spirit" [15/29,] and "I created [Adam] with my two hands," [38/75]. The hidden beauties (*mukhaddarāt-i azal*) appear in the face of man in search for the locus of [the Qur'anic versel] "We have honored the descendants of Adam," [17/70] at the time of the annihilation of the soul, because the mirror is the essence of union (*ʿayn-i jamʿ*.) Listen to the *ḥadīth*, 'whoever saw me saw God,' because in this *ḥadīth* there is an indication of ambiguity (*iltibās*) and union (*ittiḥād*.)⁴²

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 151-53.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 628.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 151-53.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 153.

Thus, it is in the context of the epiphany of God in the shape of a beauty and the ultimate identification between God and the beloved that this *ḥadīth* is quoted. However, in the ecstatic love of the mystics, the lover and the beloved are united, and it is the mystic lover who becomes the place of epiphany of God. In this context appears the motif of a mystic's acquirement of the Divine character alongside with the *imago Dei ḥadīth*.

To see the dress (*libās*) of the Divine Beauty on the character of Adam is the pure joy of love upon the form of the universe. Whoever attains the state (*ḥāl*) of "acquire [the godly character!]" will sow the seed of the eternal love in the field of "God created Adam in His shape" . . . When one who is lost in eternal love saves his soul out of the veil of the created sea, he will see the beauty of God in the nowhere place which has no traces. He cannot endure the Sun of the Majesty. He is told as follows: Be the guest of the theophany (*tajallī*) of "Behold the mountain!" [7/143] in temporal things, so that I can show you this world in the dress of the form of Adam.⁴³

When the man was specified with these two relations [i.e., the form and the spirit,] he acquired the characteristics of God. He [i.e., man] brightened up the world with His light. God said concerning man, "I formed you, and perfected your forms" [40/64.] When He gave perfection to humanity, He praised Himself without a trace of temporarity, and said, "Blessed be God, the best of creators" [23/14.] It is this secret that the leader of spirits and bodies, the cream of the ocean of lights, the knight of the fields of secrets [i.e., Muḥammad] alluded to in the language of ambiguity, when he said in the station of love out of the secret of the emotion of love in the blindness of the gnosis concerning the dressing of oneself in action, "God created Adam in His image."⁴⁴

As a conclusion, two characteristics of Rūzbihān's treatment of the *imago Dei ḥadīth* should be noted here. First, he does not distinguish the image of God from man, i.e., Adam created in His image, as Philo and early Christian fathers did. Secondly, he uses very often the term "manifestation" (*tajallī*.) God manifests Himself in Adam through all

⁴³*Ibid.*, pp. 164-65.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 305.

the Names and Attributes. The universe itself is the manifestations of God through His actions and attributes. "You should see the hundred thousand manifestations in each atom and in each stone."⁴⁵ The concept of "manifestation" is later taken over by Ibn 'Arabī, and becomes the central doctrine of his ontology. However, in Rūzbihān Baqlī, this term does not have any philosophical foundation. On the whole, his description is full of ambiguous metaphors and expressions, but lacks any philosophical and theological content. In this, he belongs to the same class of mystics as Ḥallāj.

Ghazzālī

Before Ibn 'Arabī, Ghazzālī was the most important thinker who tried to explain the *imago Dei ḥadīth* using theological and philosophical concepts. Jabre and Altmann have already discussed Ghazzālī's treatment of this *ḥadīth*.⁴⁶ The latter especially paid due attention to the connection between this *ḥadīth* and the Delphic *ḥadīth*, "Whoever knows himself knows his Lord," and compared Ghazzālī and Ibn 'Arabī in this respect. Unfortunately, however, his analysis is marred by the inaccurate translation of the *Mishkāt al-Anwār* by Gairdner, on which he relies heavily in his analysis.⁴⁷

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴⁶F. Jabre, *La notion de la ma'rifa chez Ghazālī* (Beirut, 1958), pp. 86-108. Alexander Altmann, "The Delphic Maxim," pp. 8-13.

⁴⁷For instance, Altmann ("Delphic Maxim," p. 120) analyzes the following passage from Gairdner's translation of the *Mishkāt*: "For it [i.e., the intellect] is a pattern or sample of the attributes of Allāh . . . And this may move you to set your mind to work upon the true meaning of the tradition, "Allāh created Adam after his own likeness." (W.H.T. Gairdner [trans.,] *Al-Ghazzālī's Mishkāt Al-Anwar* ["*The Niche For Lights*,"] reprint ed. [Lahore, 1952], pp. 84-85.) However, the Arabic text (Ghazzālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, ed. Abu al-'Alā 'Afīfī [Cairo, 1944], p. 44) has "the light of Allāh" instead of "the attributes of Allāh," and "image" instead of "likeness." Unfortunately Altmann's analysis depends on these mistranslated words.

Ghazzālī discusses this *ḥadīth* frequently. Here we examine his uses of the *imāgo Dei* motif in the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*,⁴⁸ the *Imlā' fī Ishkālāt al-Iḥyā'*, *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā' fī Sharḥ Ma'ānī Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*,⁴⁹ the *Mishkāt al-Anwār*,⁵⁰ and *al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr*.⁵¹

Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn

In the *Iḥyā'*, the *imago Dei* *ḥadīth* appears several times. The most important occasion is that where he enumerates five causes of love, all of which exist in the case of man's love of God.⁵² The fifth cause of love is correspondence (*munāsaba*) and affinity (*mushākala*) between the two, namely *similis simili gaudet*. And Ghazzālī affirms that this fifth cause of love also exists between God and man, because there are hidden correspondences between them. Some of them can be disclosed, some of them not. To the former belongs the moral obligation of man to acquire godly character. Man is ordered by God to imitate the character of God (*takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh*.) Here the correspondence between God and man lies in the commonness of attributes, such as "justice," "goodness" and "mercy."⁵³ However, they are not treated in the theological context, but in the context of practical ethics. This moral obliga-

⁴⁸Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 5 vols. (Cairo, n.d.)

⁴⁹*Idem.*, *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā' fī Sharḥ Ma'ānī Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*. ed. Fadlou A. Shehadi, (Beirut, 1971).

⁵⁰The edition quoted *supra*, n. 47.

⁵¹Ghazzālī, *al-Ajwiba al-Ghazzālīya fī al-Masā'il al-Ukhrawīya (al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr)* in *al-Quṣur al-'Awālī Min Rasā'il al-Imām al-Ghazzālī*, (Cairo, n.d.) pp. 347-362.

⁵²*Iḥyā'*, 4:300-307.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 306.

tion to imitate God as much as one can, appears already in Plato and is widely accepted in late antiquity.⁵⁴

As for the correspondences which are not allowed to be spoken out, Ghazzālī hints that they have something to do with the following verse of the Qur'an. "People will ask you of the spirit; say, 'The spirit belongs to the affair (*amr*) of the Lord'" (17/85.) And he continues:

This verse indicates that it is a divine affair (*amr rabbānī*) outside the limit of the intelligences of the creature. The following words of God are clearer: "when I formed and breathed into him my spirit" [15/29, 38/72.] Because of this, the angels prostrated themselves to him. To this allude the words of God, "I will make thee vicegerent on earth," [38/26] since if it were not through this correspondence, Adam would not have been worthy to be the vicegerent of God. And also to this alludes the *ḥadīth*, "God created Adam in His image." Those who are short of understanding thought wrongly that there is no form (*ṣūra*) except for the outer form which can be perceived through the senses, and they anthropomorphized (*shabbahū*) God, and thought that He has a body and an outer form. God be exalted from what the ignorant say about Him. And also to this the words of God to Moses: "I feel ill, because you did not visit Me." Moses asked, "O God, how is it possible?" God said to him, "My slave so and so became sick, and you did not visit him. If you had visited him, you would have found Me in his place." As for this correspondence, it does not appear except through devoting yourself assiduously to the supererogatory devotions (*muwāzaba 'alā al-nawāfil*) after having carried out the religious duties well, just as God said, "The slave continues to approach Me though the supererogatory devotions so that I love him, and if I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears and his sight through which he sees, his tongue through which he speaks." As for this subject, I must stop the pen here.⁵⁵

From the above hints concerning the unspeakable correspondence between man and God, the following points must be noted:

1. The *imago Dei ḥadīth* indicates the higher, unspeakable correspondence between man and God.

⁵⁴For this motif, see H. Merki, *Homoiosis Theo. Von der Platonischen Gleichung an Gott bis zur Göttlichkeit bei Gregory v. Nyssa* (Fribourg, 1952).

⁵⁵*Iḥyā'*, 4:306-307.

2. The correspondence lies in the human spirit, which is breathed into man by God, and belongs to the divine domain.
3. The correspondence has something to do with the mystical union with God, as the two latter *ḥadīths* suggest.

Imlā' fi Ishkālāt al-Ihyā

The *Imlā'* is a short treatise which Ghazzālī wrote to clarify some difficult points in the *Ihyā'*. One of the problems discussed there is the meaning of the *imago Dei ḥadīth*.⁵⁶

After having refuted those interpretations in which the pronoun of "his image" is explained as referring to other than God, Ghazzālī gives two interpretations to this *ḥadīth*. In the first interpretation the pronoun is explained as the possessive genitive (*iḍāfa mulkīya*.) He gives examples of the possessive genitive such as "his slave," "his house," and suggests that the relation between God and the image is just like the relation between the owner of a slave and a slave.⁵⁷ This interpretation is similar to that of Ibn Ḥazm.⁵⁸ However, in Ghazzālī, this interpretation leads to the assertion that "His image" means the Greater Universe in its entirety, because the universe is the possession of God *par excellence*. Thus the *ḥadīth* comes to mean that God created man as a miniature copy of the universe. Then he enumerates in

⁵⁶*Imlā'*, 5:32, 38-39.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁵⁸"Ibn Ḥazm interpretierte: Seine Form = eine Form, die Gott gehört, da er der Besitzer aller Formen ist." (Richard Gramlich, *Muḥammad al-Gazzālī's Lehre von den Stufen zur Gottesliebe* [Wiesbaden, 1984], p. 64, based on Goldziher, *Die Zahiriten*, pp. 164-65.) Gimaret, in personal correspondence, says that some theologians asserted that attribution (*iḍāfa*) of *ṣūra* to God is to be taken in the same sense as attribution to Him of everything created, insofar as it is His *act*. cf. Ibn Khuzayma, *Tawḥīd*, p. 39; Juwaynī, *Shāmil*, p. 561; Ibn Furāk, *Mushkil al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo, 1979), p. 57.

detail the correspondences between man, the microcosm and the universe, the macrocosm.⁵⁹

In the second interpretation, the pronoun is taken as the genitive of particularization (*idāfa al-takhsīṣ*).⁶⁰ Since no example is given for this genitive, what Ghazzālī means by this term is obscure. Whatever this "genitive of particularization" may mean, the *ḥadīth* is interpreted as the indication of the commonness of names God and Adam share: God is Living, Powerful, Hearer, Seer, Knower, Willer, Speaker, and Doer, and God created Adam as living, powerful, etc.⁶¹ In this interpretation, "His image" seems to be identified with His Names, although Ghazzālī does not state so explicitly. Rather, he emphasizes that this commonness of names only means that they are pronounced in the same way, nothing more.

Adam had a [real] shape which was sensible, formed, created, determined in actuality. God is attached to the form only in utterance (*bi-'l-lafz*,) because these divine Names such as "Living," "Powerful" etc. did not unite (*tajtami'*) in the attributes of Adam except in names which are only external utterances (*'ibārat talaffuẓ*.) Do not think from this the denial of [divine] Attributes. This is not our intention. Our intention is only to differentiate as far as possible between the two forms [i.e., the form of God and the form of man,] so that they [the attributes of Adam] may not unite in the Attributes of God except in utterance of names.⁶²

The above statement can be understood through the knowledge of the doctrine of the Names and Attributes of God in the Ash'arites. God is "living" through life [attribute,] but the Mu'tazilites denied the exis-

⁵⁹See *infra*, p. 92.

⁶⁰In the terminology of Arabic grammar, *idāfat al-takhsīṣ* is the *idāfa* in which *muḍāf* (*nomen regens*) is indefinite, like *ghulām rajlīn*. cf. Rāḍī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Astarābādī, *Kitāb al-Kāfiya fī al-Naḥw*. 2 vols. (Beirut, n.d.), 1:274.

⁶¹*Imlā'* in the *Iḥyā'* 5:32.

⁶²*Ibid*.

tence of the Attributes as being distinct from the Essence.⁶³ Being an Ash'arite, Ghazzālī does not deny the existence of Attributes, which are neither separate from nor identical with the Essence. However, "Life" (as an attribute of God) is not life in our sense of the word, which we understand and apply to creatures. They are common only in utterance.⁶⁴

This second explanation of Ghazzālī is quite insufficient as an interpretation of the *imago Dei ḥadīth*. If the names of Adam and God are entirely different in meaning, like homonyms, where is the correspondence between them? Although an answer is not found in the *Imlā'*, a more detailed discussion on the commonness of the names can be found in his other book, *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Ma'ānī Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*.

Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Ma'ānī
Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā

The *Maqṣad* is a commentary on the meanings of the ninety-nine names of God. In his introduction to this book, Ghazzālī discusses the theological problem of the relation between "name" (*ism*,) "the named" (*musammā*) and "naming" (*tasmiya*).⁶⁵ The problem of the commonness of names between God and man is extensively treated in the last section of this introduction, entitled "On Showing that Perfection and Happiness of Man Is in the Imitation of God's Character and the Adornment with the Meanings of His Attributes and Names insofar as This Is Conceivable of

⁶³For the divine Attributes in Ash'arite and Mu'tazilite theory, see H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), pp. 112-234.

⁶⁴*Imlā'*, in the *Iḥyā'* 5:32.

⁶⁵*Maqṣad*, pp. 17-41.

Man."⁶⁶ The argument here is quite incoherent and it is difficult to follow his logic faithfully; in Jabre's words, "on est frappe de prime abord par le caractère étrange du développement."⁶⁷

First, he distinguishes two classes of people according to their understanding of the meanings of Divine Names: the unfortunate and the fortunate. The former is further divided into three sub-classes. The first comprises those who only hear the pronunciation of the Names; their understanding is like that of animals and foreigners. The second comprises those who understand their meanings in detailed explanation (*tafsīr*) and their conventional rules. This is the understanding of linguists or rather that of normal people who understand Arabic. The third class is of those who believe with their heart that these meanings belong to God. This level of understanding is comparable to that of young men, actually, however, it is the understanding of most of the learned scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*)⁶⁸

As for the fortunate people who are called the *muqarrabūn*⁶⁹ (the people who approach God as much as possible,) they are also further divided into three sub-classes. The first is of those who understand the meaning of the Divine Names in a Sufic way, that is, through "unveiling" (*mukāshafa*) and "immediate perception" (*mushāhada*.) The second class is of those who admire the greatness of these Names thus known and desire to possess them as much as they possibly can and approach God through these Names. In order to do this, one must get rid of other desires from the heart, otherwise the seed of this desire which

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 42-59.

⁶⁷Jabre, p. 92.

⁶⁸*Maqṣad*, p. 42.

⁶⁹For this technical term in Sufism, see *infra*, p. 128.

is planted in the heart will not grow successfully. The third category is of those who actually try to acquire (*iktisāb*) these Attributes of God as far as their power can reach, and imitate God's Attributes and adorn themselves with them. Through this, man will become lord-like (*rabbānī*) and similar in rank to the angels.⁷⁰

Then Ghazzālī clarifies the concept of "nearness" (*qurb*), which corresponds to the degree of perfection (*kamāl*.) The more perfect one becomes, the nearer one approaches to the Absolute Perfection, which is God. He makes the hierarchy of existents according to their degree of perfection. Existents are divided into two classes: the living and the dead. The former class is more perfect than the latter. Next, the living are divided into three ranks (*darajāt*): angel, man and animal. Man occupies the middle rank between angels and animals.⁷¹ This intermediary position is due to man's sharing the characteristics of both angels and animals. The angels are higher in rank because their perception is not affected by nearness or distance of the objects, and their actions are not motivated by desire or anger. Man is the middle being because he has a body and is dominated by outer senses and desire and anger. However, if there appears in him the desire for perfection, he can overcome other desires, and take on the resemblance of the angels.

Characteristics of life are perception and action, which are liable to deficiency, mediocrity, and perfection. The more you imitate angels in these characteristics, the further away you are from the animal qualities and nearer to the angels. The angels are near to God. Therefore, one who is near to the angels is near to God.⁷²

⁷⁰*Maqṣad*, p. 43.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 46.

So far the discussion is on the theme of the moral obligation to acquire godly character, which, as we have seen in the *Ihyā'*, is the non-secret, esoteric correspondence between man and God. However, at this point comes the abrupt change of subject. The above argument indicates that, if one acquires the godly character, he becomes similar to God. But as is said in the Qur'an, there is nothing similar to God. Ghazzālī's answer to this criticism is the strong affirmation of the absolute transcendence of God. If two things share the same description, this does not necessarily indicate their closeness. Rather, entirely opposite things can share the same names. For instance, "black" and "white" share the common descriptions of "color," "accident," and "perceptible to the eye." Although man and horse can share the common attribute of "smartness" (*kiyāsa*), the horse does not have any likeness (*mithl*) of man, because "smartness" is the accident which is outside the quidity (*māhīya*), which consists of the essence of man. The Essence of God, which is the necessary existence, cannot be known by man nor shared by him. These Divine Attributes which are shared by man do not pertain to His Essence, therefore there is no resemblance (*mumāthala*) between God and man. In this sense, no one can know God's essential nature except God Himself, and Ghazzālī quotes the saying of Junayd, "No one knows God except God."⁷³

So far, the argument has shifted from the ethical exhortation of *imitatio Dei* to the theological affirmation of the unknowability of the Divine Essence. With this change, the Attributes under discussion also change from moral qualities to theological Attributes devoid of moral qualities, such as "life," "sight," etc. And Ghazzālī here seems to accept the possibility of man's knowledge of non-essential Attributes of

⁷³*Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

God. Thus, alongside the saying of Junayd, he also agrees to the saying, "I don't know anything except God," at a different level. His example is as follows:

If you show someone a piece of writing, and ask whether he knows the writer, and he says "no," the answer is correct. And if he says, "yes, the writer is a living man, capable, hearing, seeing, and sound of hand, knowing the art of writing, and I know all these things about him, so how do I not know him?" This answer is also correct in another way.⁷⁴

In the above quotation, the piece of writing is compared to creation, i.e., the universe. From creation, we can infer that God has such and such qualities. But it does not mean that he really knows God as to who He is, just like the person in the above example does not really know the writer as to who he is. In this way, Ghazzālī again emphasizes that the Names of God are derived from Attributes, which do not really describe His Essence. It is as if someone asks what this is, pointing to some animal, and gets the answer that it is tall, or it is white. Thus, Names such as "Powerful," "Knower" only indicate that something unknown and uncanny has the qualities of knowledge and power. In short, this position is taken by Ghazzālī to safeguard the transcendence of God by radically distinguishing His Essence from the Attributes. Only latter can be known by us through creation.⁷⁵

Then it is asked of Ghazzālī what is the way (*sabīl*) to the knowledge of God. The question seems redundant, because the answer is already given in the above discussion. However, the answer given by him is considerably different. Here Ghazzālī denies even the possibility of knowing the Attributes, because the meanings of the Divine Attributes and the meanings of these attributes which we understand in reference to

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

ourselves are fundamentally different.

First, Ghazzālī distinguishes two types of knowledge: knowledge gained through direct experience and knowledge gained by inference. The example he gives is of the knowledge of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure can be known either by experience or by inference, for instance, by comparing it to the pleasure experienced when one eats sugar. Of course, only the first type of knowledge is real knowledge. However, this type of knowledge is closed for man with regard to the knowledge of God. The second type of knowledge leads to illusion (*tawahhum*, *ihām*,) because one compares something to some other thing which it does not in reality resemble at all. For instance, the sexual union has no similarity at all with sugar, although both can be described as pleasure (*lidh-dha*.) They are only sharing the same name (*mushāraka fī 'l-ism*,) but in reality there is no correspondence (*munāsaba*) between the two. Then he applies this theory to the Attributes of God. The Life of God and our lives are only common in pronunciation, they are in reality as different as sexual union and sugar. To know the Life of God through our lives is as illusory as knowing sexual pleasure through the pleasure of eating sugar.⁷⁶

His agnosticism is then extended to everything of which we cannot have direct experience, from the knowledge of prophethood, Heaven, and Hell to that of sorcery. Not only can we not know God except by inferring from the names and attributes within us, but also we cannot know Heaven and Hell except by inferring from the names and attributes within us.⁷⁷ "Sorcery can only be known by a sorcerer himself."⁷⁸ Therefore the

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 56.

ultimate goal of the knowledge of God is to know its impossibility. And he quotes the famous saying attributed to Abu Bakr, "the impossibility of achieving knowledge is the only knowledge."⁷⁹

Then the further question is asked of him why, in spite of the fact that the knowledge of God is utterly impossible for the creature, there are still differences in the degree of knowledge between angels, prophets, saints, and ordinary men. In answering the question, Ghazzālī again shifts from total agnosticism to the possibility of the knowledge of attributes through creation. The more deeply one understands His works in the universe, the more advanced one becomes in his knowledge of God. As an example, he compares the door-keeper's knowledge of Shāfi'ī with that of his disciple. The door-keeper knows that Shāfi'ī is a knower of the *sharī'a*, he writes many books, and he is the guide to the creature to God, but his disciple who reads his books and understands them knows Shāfi'ī in real sense.⁸⁰

The above example contradicts his previous example of sex and sugar, because the disciple's knowledge of his master is real knowledge, while the knowledge of sexual pleasure through comparison is an illusory and imperfect knowledge. To know God through His works and to know Him through inference from our attributes are two different things, but Ghazzālī places them alongside each other.

Thus the gist concerning the Power of God for us is that it is an Attribute (*waṣf*,) and its fruit and traces are the existence of things. The name "power" is pronounced for this, because it corresponds to our power, just as the pleasure of sex corresponds to the pleasure of sugar. Our power is entirely different from the reality of the divine Power. Yes, the more a slave increases the understanding of the details of the objects of His creative Power and the wonders of His work in the Divine domain of the Heavens (*malakūt al-samawāt*,)

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

the more abounding his lot becomes concerning the knowledge of the Attribute of Power, because the fruit indicates the One who bears the fruit (*muthmir.*) In the same manner, the more a disciple increases in cognizance of the details of the knowledge of his master and his writings, the more perfect his knowledge of his master becomes and the more perfect his admiration for him becomes.⁸¹

The knowledge of His works, i.e., the universe, certainly does not lead to the knowledge of His Essence, but only of His Attributes. This seems to imply that His Attributes are agents of the creation of the universe, and the universe is their effect. A disciple's knowledge of the master through his work appears to be another example of man's knowledge of the Creator through the knowledge of His works. But this example is still different from the example of one's knowledge of the writer through inference from a mere piece of writing. It is possible for a disciple to advance his knowledge and become equal with his master. If a disciple attains such a degree, the master and the disciple share the same knowledge and the same object of knowledge. And this is the real commonness between man and God, which we have seen in Origen treated in the previous section.

However, Ghazzālī takes a different line when he explains the cause-effect relationship between God and the universe. His example is the Neo-Platonic metaphor of the sun and light.⁸² As the sun emanates light, which makes colors and shapes appear to the eyes, God's light existentiates all the objects of the universe; whatever we see is the light of the sun; light is from the sun, and also not different from it. Therefore, we can say that we do not see anything except the sun. It is in this meaning that the above quoted saying, "I know nothing but God," should be interpreted, because "God is the spring of existence, which

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 58

emanates upon every existent; there is nothing in existence except God."⁸³ This existential monism is not an isolated case in Ghazzālī. A similar thought is also found in the *Mishkāt al-Anwār*.⁸⁴

It is not our aim here to explain his contradictions and systematize his thought. Rather, we summarize the main points of his thought in the following manner:

1. The Essence of God is unknowable to man.
2. The commonness of names and attributes between God and man is not real. Knowledge of God through names and attributes which we understand in reference to ourselves is inadequate and, indeed, illusory.
3. Knowledge of God through His works is possible. The existence of the universe comes from God, and, in a way, it is His existence. Therefore, knowledge of the universe leads to knowledge of God.

Mishkāt al-Anwār

The *Mishkāt al-Anwār* is considered as one of the esoteric books of Ghazzālī. The treatise is divided in two parts: the first part deals with the esoteric interpretation of the Light verse (24/35,) while the second part deals with the interpretation of the *ḥadīth* of the seven hundred veils.

In this treatise, the *imago Dei ḥadīth* appears three times. The first discussion on this *ḥadīth* appears in the first chapter. First Ghazzālī asserts that besides the physical eye, man has an inner eye, which is more worthy of and fitting to the name "eye." This is the intellect.⁸⁵ He then explicitly states that the terms "spirit" (*rūḥ*)

⁸³*Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

⁸⁴*Mishkāt*, pp. 55-56.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, p. 43-44.

and "soul" (*nafs*) both refer to this intellect. The physical eye cannot see objects which are too near or too far away, but the distance does not hinder the intellect from perceiving objects, because it transcends space.

It [the intellect] is the copy (*unnūdhaj*) of the Light of God, and the copy cannot be devoid of similarity (*muhākāt*) even if it does not rise to the summit of equality (*musāwāt*), and this may move you to understand the secret of Muḥammad's saying, "God created Adam in his image."⁸⁶

Although Ghazzālī hesitates to give further explanations, we can at least know the following points from the above passage. First, the *imago Dei ḥadīth* refers to the human intellect. Secondly, the *ḥadīth* expresses the model-copy relationship. The copy is the intellect within us, and the model is the divine Light. This relationship implies similarity, but not equality.

The second place in which the *imago Dei ḥadīth* is quoted is the most difficult passage to interpret, and called by Altmann the "acme of al-Ghazzālī's mystical interpretation on self-knowledge."⁸⁷ Here Ghazzālī discusses the Sufis' experience of the perfect union with God, that is, *fanā'*, or more properly, *fanā' al-fanā'*, because in this stage one does not have even the consciousness of *fanā'*.⁸⁸ Although some call this stage *ittiḥād* (union,) he prefers to call it *tawḥīd* (unity, unification.) There is no higher stage to ascend to for the mystic who has achieved this stage. The only possibility left for him is to descend to the lowest heaven (*nuzūl ilā samā' al-dunyā*.) Then he quotes the following words of the sages affirmatively, "the descent to the lowest heaven is the descent of an angel (*nuzūl malak*)," while he

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁸⁷Altmann, "Delphic Maxim," p. 11.

⁸⁸*Mishkāt*, pp. 57-58.

disapproves the words of some sages, "it is the descent of God, namely God descends to use the mystic's senses and move his members."⁸⁹ For Ghazzālī, the latter view is an illusion (*tawahhum*) of those who are immersed in the Divine Singularity (*fardānīya*.) However, those who claim the descent of God refer to the *ḥadīth* of *nawāfil*, "I become his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees, and his tongue through which he speaks," and God's words to Moses, "I became sick, but you did not visit me." The opinion which Ghazzālī refutes here is the incarnation (*ḥulūl*) theory of Ḥallāj.

Motions of this perfect realizer of unification (*muwaḥḥid*) derive from the lower heaven, and his senses (*iḥsāsāt*), such as hearing and seeing, from the heaven above it, and his intellect from the still higher heaven, and he rises from the heaven of the intellect to the extreme ascent of creatures (*muntahā mi'rāj al-khalā'iq*.) The Kingdom of Singularity (*mamlakat al-fardānīya*) is the end of seven levels (*sab' ṭabaqāt*.) After this He sits on the Throne of the Absolute Unity (*waḥdānīya*), and from there He manages the affair for the seven levels of His heaven. Maybe one sees such a mystic and applies to him the saying, "God created Adam in the image of the Merciful One." However, if one contemplates it attentively, one knows that this saying has an interpretation (*ta'wīl*) just like the saying, "I am God," or "Glory to me," and also like God's words to Moses, "I became sick and you did not visit me," and "I become his hearing, his sight, and his tongue." But now I must stop the explanation here.⁹⁰

Thus the *imago Dei ḥadīth* expresses, though erroneously, the incarnation of God in the body of a mystic. For Ghazzālī, this is an illusion of mystics, and the *imago Dei ḥadīth* requires an interpretation, like the *shaṭḥīyāt* of mystics. Although the correct interpretation is not given by him, the words of the sages, "the descent of an angel," which Ghazzālī approves of, seems to suggest the interpretation. In the above quoted passage, he discusses the condition of the perfect mystic in relation to his motions, senses, and the intellect. It is his

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

intellect which rises to the highest heaven of the Kingdom of Singularity. It is possible that in this heaven he becomes identical with the angel. We have seen that in the *Maqṣad*, man is placed between the angel and the animal.⁹¹ The more perfect one becomes, the nearer he approaches the rank of the angel. Then the one who achieves the highest ascent of creatures becomes identical with the angel. Altmann suggests that the mystic unites not with God, but with the supernal intellect.⁹² Since the supernal intellects are identical with angels according to the Muslim philosophers, it is possible that Ghazzālī also considered the angel as the supernal intellect. As we have seen in the *Maqṣad*, the characteristics of the angel are those of the intellect.⁹³

The third and last part in which the *imago Dei ḥadīth* is used is especially important, because here this *ḥadīth* is combined with the Delphic *ḥadīth*, "Whoever knows himself . . ."⁹⁴ In this part, Ghazzālī explains the correspondence (*munāsaba*) and homology (*muwāzana*) between the higher world, which is also called the "spiritual world" and the "intelligible world," and the visible universe. The key to the correspondence is symbolism (*tamthīl*); the visible universe is the symbol (*mithāl*) of the Higher World. After having explained what the sun, the moon, the planets, the mountain and valleys of the visible world symbolize in the higher world, he continues as follows:

There is in it [i.e., the presence of Lordship, *ḥaḍra al-rubūbiyya*] something with which detailed sciences are engraved in the [spiritual] substances (*jawāhir*) susceptible of them, and its symbol (*mithāl*) is the Pen. If there is among these receiving substances some [substance] which precedes others in

⁹¹*Supra*, p. 33.

⁹²Altmann, "Delphic Maxim", p. 12.

⁹³*Supra*, p. 33.

⁹⁴*Mishkāt*, pp. 65-72.

reception, and from it [these sciences] are transmitted to others, its symbol is the Well-Preserved Tablet, and Spread Parchment. If above the engraver of the sciences [i.e., the Pen] there is something which governs [the Pen,] its symbol is the Hand. And if this Presence, which comprises the Hand, the Tablet, the Pen, the Book, has the arranged order (*tartīb manẓūm*,) its symbol is the Image *ṣūra* [i.e., the higher universe can symbolically be said to possess the image.] If a similar kind of order is found in the human image (*ṣūra insīya*,) then it [the human image] is in the image of the Merciful One. There is a difference between the saying "in the image of God," and "in the image of the Merciful One," because it is the Divine Mercy (*rahma ilāhīya*) which formed the Divine Presence (*al-ḥaḍra al-ilāhīya*) with this image. Then God bestowed a favor upon Adam and gave him a summary image (*ṣūra mukhtaṣara*) which comprises (*jāmi'a*) all the species of what exists in the universe, so that it is as if he were everything in the universe, or he were a copy (*nuskha*) of the summary universe. And the image of Adam -- I mean this image -- is written with the writing of God . . . Were it not for this divine Mercy, man would not be able to know his Lord, because none can know his Lord except the one who knows himself. Since this was due to the effects (*āthār*) of Mercy, he was in the image of the Merciful One, not in the image of God. The presence of Divinity (*ḥaḍrat al-ilāhīya*) is different from the Presence of the Kingship (*ḥaḍrat al-mulk*) and also from that the Lordship . . . If it were not for this reason, it would be necessary to say "in His image;" however, the correct text which appears in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī is "in the image of the Merciful One."⁹⁵

Ghazzālī's train of thought in the above passage is not easy to follow. In the first part, he deals with the correspondences between the higher world, which is here called "the Presence of Lordship," and the lower world, i.e., the visible universe. However, the topic suddenly changes to the correspondence between the higher world and man. Both have an analogous order, that is, both possess a common image. Therefore, man can be said to be created in the image of the higher world, that is, he is modeled according to the order of the higher world. However, in the second part, the correspondence between man and the universe is detailed; man is a miniature copy of the universe and comprises everything which exists in the universe. Ghazzālī is not clear as to

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

whether the universe in this context means the higher world or the lower world, i.e., the visible universe. However, this question is not important, because there is a close correspondence between the two worlds; the one is the symbol of the other. Thus, the higher world, the visible universe, and man coincide, because their images are analogous. And thanks to this correspondence man's knowledge leads to the knowledge of his Lord. It must be noted that this knowledge does not mean the knowledge of God, i.e., His essence. Ghazzālī in the above quotation emphasizes the differences between "the image of God (*Allāh*)" and "the image of the Merciful (*Raḥman*).⁹⁶ The Divine Names should be differentiated in reference to man and the visible universe. "The Merciful," "the King," and "the Lord" give different effects to man and the universe. The Higher World is the presences (*ḥaḍarāt*) of many different Names of God. Thus man, who knows himself, knows the Presence of Lordship, that is, he knows His Name, "the Lord," but not His Name, *Allāh*. The fact that man has the analogous order to that of the universe is the effect of His Name, "the Merciful," thus man is created in the image of the Merciful.

al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr

Al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr is another of Ghazzālī's esoteric treatises. However, its authorship has sometimes been disputed.⁹⁶ The treatise consists of questions and answers concerning the creation of Adam.

The treatise begins with the explanations of the meanings of "forming" (*taswiya*) and "inbreathing" (*nafkh*) in the Qur'anic verse, "when I formed him and breathed into him my Spirit" (15/29, 38/72.) Next, he discusses

⁹⁶For the problem of the authorship of this treatise, see W. Montgomery Watt, "The authenticity of the works attributed to al-Ghazzālī," *JRAS* (1952), pp. 36-7; 'Abd al-Raḥman Badawī, *Mu'allafāt al-Ghazzālī* (Cairo, 1961), pp. 156-58.

the nature of the human spirit.⁹⁷ The spirit is a substance (*jawhar.*) His proof is as follows. It knows itself, and its Creator, and perceives the intelligibles (*ma'qūlāt.*) Thus, it has various kinds of knowledge (*'ulūm,*) which are accidents (*a'rād.*) An accident can only subsist in a substance, not in another accident. Therefore, the spirit is a substance. However, the spirit is not body, and thus does not occupy space (*ghayr mutahayyiz.*) It is neither inside nor outside of the body, neither connected with nor separate from the body, because these are characteristics of those things which occupy space.⁹⁸

Then, Ghazzālī points out that the above characteristics of the spirit are also those of the Attributes of God. Some vulgar people like the schools of Karrāmiya and Hanbaliya could not think of existence outside the body, and claimed that God has a body.⁹⁹ Some like the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites affirmed the above mentioned transcendental characteristics only in reference to the Attributes of God. And they regarded those who attribute these characteristics to the human spirits as infidels, saying that those who say such things are claiming godhead for themselves. Their false accusation comes from their opinion that if two things which occupy the same place share the same characteristics, they cannot be distinguished, therefore they are identical. Ghazzālī refutes this opinion, saying that there are three ways to distinguish two things which share the same characteristics, namely through space, time, and definition (*ḥadd*) and essence (*ḥaqīqa.*)¹⁰⁰ Of course, the distinction between God and the human spirit can be made

⁹⁷*Maḍnūn Ṣaghīr*, p. 350.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 351-52.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 352.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, p. 353.

through definition and essence. The characteristics which God and the spirit share, such as "non-spatialness" (*al-barā'a 'an al-makān wa al-jīha*) are not the essential characteristics of God, which only God possesses. The essential characteristic of God is that He is sustainer of all things (*qayyūm*,) subsisting by His Essence (*qā'im bi-dhātihi*.) All other existents exist through Him. They are non-existent in reference to their essences. They borrow existence from God. In this respect, the human spirit shares the characteristics of the creature. Ghazzālī denies the pre-existence of the human spirit. Like other creatures, it is created by God.¹⁰¹

However, the Qur'anic verse, "I breathed into him my spirit (*min rūhī*,)" indicates the special relation (*nīsba*) between God and the human spirit, through which it is distinguished from other creatures. Ghazzālī explains this special relation in the following way, using the metaphor of the emanation of light from the sun.

It [the Qur'anic verse] is like the words of the sun: If the sun could speak, it would say, "I poured forth (*afadtu*) upon earth my light (*min nūrī*)" . . . The light which the earth receives is of the same kind as the light of the sun in a certain respect, although it is extremely weak in relation to the light of the sun. You already know that the spirit is transcendent of direction and space, capable of knowing all things. These are the correspondences (*muḍāhāt*) and affinity (*munāsaba*) [between God and the spirit.]¹⁰²

Then Ghazzālī is asked about the meaning of the *imago Dei ḥadīth*. He first states that the *ṣūra* (image, form) is a homonym (*ism mushtarak*,) and can be used both of sensible things in the literal sense and of abstract things in the sense of "order" (*tartīb*,) "structure" (*tarkīb*,) "proportionateness" (*tanāsub*,) like the "*ṣūra* of the question" and the

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 354-55.

"*ṣūra* of the event." Of course, in the *ḥadīth* the *ṣūra* is used in the latter sense.¹⁰³

The *ḥadīth* refers to the correspondence (*muqāhāt*) between man and God. This correspondence stems from essence (*dhāt*,) attributes (*ṣifāt*,) and actions (*af'āl*.) As for the essence, the essence of the spirit (*rūḥ*) is as follows: it subsists in itself, it is neither accident nor body, nor spatial substance (*jawhar mutahayyiz*); it does not occupy space, nor has direction; it is not connected with the body nor the world, nor is it separate from them; it is not inside of the universe or the body, nor outside of them. The same descriptions also apply to the Essence of God.¹⁰⁴

As for the attributes, the explanation is the same as the second interpretation of the *imago Dei ḥadīth* in the *Imlā'*: God created man as living, knowing, powerful, willing, hearing, seeing, and speaking. All these also apply to God.¹⁰⁵ However, unlike the *Imlā'*, the commonness of names is here not restricted to pronunciation.

As for the actions, the explanation is most lengthy. Man's action has the same order (*tartīb*) as God's. Just as man's action is carried out through long chains of intermediaries (e.g., the will in the heart---> brain---> nerves---> sinews---> hands---> pen,) so God's action is not carried out except through long chains of intermediaries, that is, angels and planets. Here the macrocosm-microcosm motif comes into the foreground.¹⁰⁶ Man's control over his body (microcosm) resembles the Creator's control over the universe (macrocosm.) And he

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, p. 357.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 357-58.

enumerates the points of correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm in detail.

Next, Ghazzālī is asked about the meaning of the Delphic *ḥadīth*, "whoever knows himself . . ."¹⁰⁷ He first affirms the Empedoclean principle of "likes are known by likes:" things are known through the corresponding copies (*al-amthila al-munāsiba.*) Were it not for this correspondence (*muḍāhāt,*) man could not advance from his self-knowledge to the knowledge of the Creator. In the same way, if there were no correspondence between the universe and man, man's knowledge of the universe would be impossible.

If God had not united in man the copy (*mithāl*) of the entire universe, so that he is like the summary copy (*nuskha mukhtaṣara*) of the universe, and like the lord (*rabb*) who exercises dominion over his universe [i.e., the body,] man would not know the universe, nor Dominion (*taṣarruf,*) nor Lordship (*rubūbiya,*) nor intellect (*ʿaql,*) nor Power, nor Knowledge, nor the rest of the Divine Attributes. However, the soul (*nafs*) became the ladder (*mirqāt*) to the knowledge of its Creator, thanks to correspondence and parallelism (*muwāzana.*)¹⁰⁸

It should be noted that here Ghazzālī interprets the term *nafs* in the Delphic *ḥadīth* as the soul. As we have seen in the *Mishkāt*, the intellect, the spirit, and the soul are identical. Because of the correspondence between God and the soul, the one who knows his soul, knows God. This correspondence is that of actions in the previous discussion. Because the soul acts like the lord over its body, it is, in a way, a god in microcosm. Thus, it has the Divine Attributes in itself, and by knowing itself, it can know the Attributes of God, the Lord of the macrocosm. Lastly, in the above quotation, it is said that man's self-knowledge also leads to his knowledge of the universe, but here the knowledge of the universe is not well related to the knowledge of God,

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 358-59.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p. 359.

because the relation between God and the universe is not discussed at all.

Ibn 'Arabī

Ibn 'Arabī's anthropology is often labeled as the theory of the Perfect Man. It is true that Ibn 'Arabī is the first thinker to use the phrase "the Perfect Man" in a technical sense.¹⁰⁹ However, although the term entered into the common vocabulary among the later followers of Ibn 'Arabī, and was made famous especially by Jīlī's *al-Insān al-Kāmil fī Ma'rifat al-Awākhir wa al-Awā'il*,¹¹⁰ Ibn 'Arabī himself used the term rather infrequently in his works. For instance, it is used only once in the three important treatises on metaphysics edited by H. S. Nyberg.¹¹¹ The term does not appear at all in the *Shajarat al-Kawn*,¹¹² although S. H. Nasr thinks that this treatise is specially concerned with the idea of the Perfect Man.¹¹³ In his most mature and influential work, the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the term is used only seven times.¹¹⁴ In this section we examine Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy of man, conceptualized by "the Perfect Man," and symbolized by Adam created in the image of God.

¹⁰⁹R. A. Nicholson, "al-Insān al-Kāmil," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1974), p. 170; *idem.*, *Studies*, p. 77; A. Jeffery, "Ibn al-'Arabī's *Shajarat al-Kawn*," *Studia Islamica* 10 (1959): 51, n. 1; S. H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Cambridge, 1964), p. 110.

¹¹⁰Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil fī Ma'rifat al-Awākhir wa al-Awā'il* (Cairo, 1970).

¹¹¹These are the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, the *Uqlat al-Mustawfiz*, and *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhiya fī Islāḥ al-Mamlaka al-Insāniya*, all edited by Nyberg in his *Kleinere Schriften*. The phrase occurs in the *Uqlat al-Mustawfiz*, p. 45. The passage is translated *infra*, p. 112.

¹¹²Ibn 'Arabī, *Shajarat al-Kawn* (Cairo, 1968).

¹¹³Nasr, *Muslim Sages*, p. 166, n. 66.

¹¹⁴*Fuṣūṣ*, pp. 50; 55 bis; 75; 120; 199 bis.

The Perfect Man As Adam

In four cases out of the entire seven occurrences of the phrase "the Perfect Man" in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the phrase is used in the description of Adam. Indeed, three instances of this phrase occur in the chapter on Adam. Thus, the concept of the Perfect Man is closely related to his speculation on Adam, who is created in God's image as His vicegerent on earth. The following is the clearest description of the Perfect Man.

Iblīs was [just] a part of the universe, and this synthesis (*jamʿiyya*) [which Adam possessed] did not occur in him. Because of the [synthesis], Adam was the vicegerent. If he were not manifest in the image of Him who appointed him the vicegerent in the universe, he would not be the vicegerent. And if there were not in him everything required by his subjects, over whom he is appointed the vicegerent -- because of their dependency on him, it is necessary that he provide them with everything they need -- he would not be the vicegerent over them. Therefore the vicegerency is fitting only for the Perfect Man. He [God] composed his outer image (*ṣūra ḡāhira*) from the realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*) of the universe and its forms, and He composed his inner image (*ṣūra bāṭina*) in His own image.¹¹⁵

In the above quotation, Adam is characterized as "synthesis." The concept of "synthesis" (*jamʿiyya*) is one of the most important key words of Ibn ʿArabī's anthropology. At the beginning of the chapter on Adam, it is said that God wanted to see His Essence (*ʿayn*) in a synthetical being (*kawn jāmiʿ*) which encompasses (*yaḥṣur*) all His affair (*amr*), and He created Adam.¹¹⁶ But of what is man the synthesis? As is apparent from the above quotation, he is the synthesis of the image of God and the image of the universe. In the passage which precedes the above quotation, Ibn ʿArabī writes, commenting on the Qur'anic verse, "What pre-

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 48.

vents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with my two hands?" (38/75):

What prevents him [i.e., Satan] [from prostrating himself to Adam] is nothing else but [Adam's] very synthesis (*jam'*) of the two images, that is, the image of the universe and the image of God.¹¹⁷

The outer form of Adam clearly signifies the physical body of man, and the inner form his spiritual faculty. Further, Ibn 'Arabī remarkably interprets the *nawāfil ḥadīth*, "I [God] become his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees," in this context.

Therefore He said in the *ḥadīth*, "I become his hearing and his sight." He did not say, "I become his eye and his ear," because He distinguished the two forms. [i.e., the eye and the ear belong to the physical world.]¹¹⁸

Also in the last part of the chapter on Adam, Ibn 'Arabī concludes his discussion as follows:

You knew the wisdom of the formation (*nash'a*) of Adam, I mean his outer image; also you knew the formation of the spirit (*rūḥ*) of Adam, I mean his inner image . . . and his saying, "fear your lord," [means]: make what is outer in you (*mā ṣāḥara minkum*) a protection (*wiqāya*) for your lord, and make what is inner in you (*mā baṭāna minkum*,) that is your lord, a protection for you.¹¹⁹

We have already seen in the first part of this paper that in the Judeo-Christian tradition the theory of the double nature of man was widespread. In that tradition, the inner, godly nature of man refers to the spirit, or the soul, while the outer, worldly nature refers to the body. Now, it is the former which is created in the image of God. Therefore the above thought of Ibn 'Arabī belongs to this tradition. Also in his other works, he frequently refers to this subject. In the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir* he writes:

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 56.

Man consists of two copies (*nuskhatān*,) that is, the outer copy and the inner copy. The outer copy corresponds to the universe . . . and the inner copy corresponds to the Divine Presence.¹²⁰

Sometimes the vicegerency is assigned especially to the spirit. For instance, in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*, after having explained the individual soul (*al-nufūs al-juz'īya*) as the spirit breathed in by God (*al-rūḥ al-manfūkh*,) Ibn 'Arabī writes:

God assigned them [i.e., the individual souls] to govern (*tadbīr*) the body, and appointed them as the vicegerent over it, making it clear to them that they are vicegerents in it.¹²¹

The vicegerency of the spirit over the kingdom of the body and its government of it is the main subject of *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīya fī Iṣlāḥ al-Mamlaka al-Insānīya*.

However, the synthesis (*jam'īya*,) or the totality (*majmū'*) which God confers upon Adam, and thanks to which he is the vicegerent, is also interpreted by Ibn 'Arabī in more metaphysical and theological terms. Thus Adam represents the synthesis of all the realities (*ḥaqā'iq*) of the universe and all the Names of God, the former being his outer image, the latter his inner image. In the above first quotation of the description of the Perfect Man, it is said that, if there were not in him everything required by his subjects, he would not be the vicegerent. What is required by his subjects is the realities of all the existents in the universe. The following description of the Perfect Man in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* explains this aspect of the synthesis more clearly.

¹²⁰ *Inshā'*, p. 21.

¹²¹ *Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*, 4 vols (Cairo, A. H. 1329), 2:272. Unfortunately, only nine volumes of Osman Yahya's critical edition of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya* (Cairo, 1972-) have been published to date. These correspond to the first volume of the above 1329 edition. The 1329 edition is used for the part where this critical edition is not available. Osman Yahya's edition is henceforth indicated as *Futūḥāt* (ed. Yahya), and the 1329 edition as *Futūḥāt*.

He [God] created in this noble compendium (*mukhtaṣar*,) which is the Perfect Man, all the Divine Names and the realities of those which exist outside him in the greater universe which is separate (*munfaṣil*) from him. And He made him the spirit (*rūḥ*) of the universe.¹²²

The concepts of "realities" and "the Divine Names" are taken by Ibn 'Arabī from Islamic theology, and his use of these terms closely bound to his metaphysics. Therefore, in order to understand the concept of "synthesis" more deeply, it is necessary to investigate the ontological and epistemological functions of the realities of the universe and the Divine Names in his metaphysics. In the following two sections, these two concepts are examined respectively, and the implications of each concept in relation to his interpretation of the *imago Dei ḥadīth* are discussed in detail.

The Theory of Knowledge

The concept of "realities" is often used synonymously with the concept of "meanings, concepts" (*ma'ānī*) by Ibn 'Arabī, and firmly related to his epistemology.

Ibn 'Arabī defines knowledge as follows:

Now we first say that knowledge means a reality (*ḥaqīqa*) in the mind (*nafs*,) i.e., a reality which relates itself both to a non-existent and to an existent, in accordance with its reality on the basis of which it exists [in the case of an existent,] or would exist [in the case of a non-existent,] were it to come into existence. This reality is then knowledge.¹²³

The above definition of knowledge, although somewhat obscure, is extremely important to understand his epistemology. The definition is obscure, because the term "reality" is used twice in the definition: first

¹²²*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 199.

¹²³*Inshā'*, p. 10.

is a reality in the mind as knowledge; second is a reality on the basis of which a thing exists. "Realities" are often qualified by Ibn 'Arabi with the adjectives "universal" (*kullīya*) and "intelligible in the mind" (*ma'qūla fī al-dhihn.*) And he gives the following examples of "realities."

Know that timber in its turn is but a special form of woodness (*'ūdīya*) do not conceive woodness except as intelligible and comprehensible reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-ma'qūlīya al-jāmi'a.*) It is found in every chair and ink-pot in its entirety without any diminution or excess. Although there may be several realities in it, such as woodness (*al-ḥaqīqa al-'ūdīya,*) oblongness (*istitālīya,*) squareness (*tar-bī'īya,*) quantity (*kammīya,*) and so on, every one of them is found in its entirety.¹²⁴

Thus woodness, oblongness, squareness, and quantity are all called realities. In the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, he also explains the universals (*al-umūr al-kullīya*) in terms of the "realities."

The prediction (*ḥukm*) of concrete objects is reducible to the universals in accordance with what the realities of these concrete existents demand, like the relation of knowledge to the knower and life to living. Life is an intelligible reality (*ḥaqīqa ma'qūla,*) and knowledge is also an intelligible reality which is different from life.¹²⁵

Thus, such abstract concepts as knowledge and life are called intelligible realities. In *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya* as well, he calls humanity (*insānīya*) a reality.

Although Zayd is not identical with 'Amr with respect to their shapes, he is identical with 'Amr with respect to humanity (*insānīya.*) He is not other than 'Amr. If he is not other than 'Amr with respect to humanity, then he is not his likeness, but they are identical. The reality of humanity is not divisible, rather it is in every man in its entirety, not in part. There is no likeness of humanity. The same applies to all other realities.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹²⁵ *Fuṣūṣ*, p. 52.

¹²⁶ *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahyā) 3:345-46.

From these examples of the use of "reality," we can conclude that realities are universals, that is, abstract concepts, synonymous with "meaning" (*ma'nā.*)

Now it is clear why the term "reality" is used twice in the definition of knowledge quoted above. First it is the universal which exists in particular existents; secondly it is the universal in man's mind as knowledge of a thing. For instance, in the case of man's knowledge of a dog, the *modus operandi* is as follows: there is a reality of the dog, i.e., "dogness" in every particular dog which exists *in concreto*. When man perceives a particular dog, the reality of the dog is registered in the mind, and this reality is his knowledge of the dog.

So far we have clarified his concept of "reality" and his theory of man's perceptive knowledge. Now we can go into one of the most characteristic points of his epistemology, that is, parallelism between man's knowledge and God's knowledge, and then his theory of non-perceptive knowledge, in which this parallelism is most clear. The most succinct and lucid exposition of his epistemology can be found in the small treatise, *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, which was later largely incorporated in the *Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*.¹²⁷

In this treatise he uses consistent parallelism between man's knowledge and God's knowledge in the presentation of his theory of knowledge, and he calls this parallelism the correspondence (*muḍāḥāt.*) However, there is a fundamental difference between the two. God's knowledge is the perception (*idrāk*) of the differentiated (*mufaṣṣal*) in the undifferentiated (*mujmal,*) while man, on the other hand, can know the undifferentiated only through the differentiated, namely through temporal

¹²⁷e.g., *Inshā'*, pp. 16-19 corresponds to *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 2:223-25; *Inshā'*, pp. 36-38 to *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 2:125-129.

objects which occur in the phenomenal universe.¹²⁸ In other words, God's knowledge works deductively from the universal to particulars, while man's knowledge works inductively from particulars to the universal. In the case of God, Ibn 'Arabi thinks, like Islamic philosophers, that His knowledge is not in need of the sense-perception of particular existents *in concreto*.¹²⁹ He does not perceive creatures which exist in the universe. His knowledge is universal, and He can differentiate this universal knowledge whenever He wants, and in this way He can reach the knowledge of particulars, which consist of a certain combination of universals.

This undifferentiated, most universal knowledge is called by Ibn 'Arabi "the reality of realities" (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*,) or *summum genus* (*jins al-ajnās*).¹³⁰ The reality of realities is the knowledge of God; however, it is also man's knowledge, only he reaches this knowledge through the knowledge of particulars. Although the *modus operandi* is different, ultimately the knowledge of God and the knowledge of man are the same. And according to Ibn 'Arabi, herein lies the secret of the correspondence between God and man.¹³¹ This point will become clearer in

¹²⁸*Inshā'* p. 14. The undifferentiated knowledge is similar to Ibn Sina's concept of *scientia simplex*, i.e., the simple, total knowledge which is the creator of the detailed discursive knowledge. This simple knowledge is identified by Ibn Sina with the Active Intellect. c.f. Fazlur Rahman, "Ibn Sina", in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. by M.M. Sharif, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1963), 1:492. However, while in Ibn Sina, this simple, total knowledge is the knowledge of man, in Ibn 'Arabi, the undifferentiated knowledge is the self-knowledge of God.

¹²⁹Also in Ibn Sina, God has no perceptual knowledge of particular existents in the universe. God knows all the particulars in a universal manner. As far as God's knowledge is concerned, there is a strong similarity between Ibn Sina's doctrine and that of Ibn 'Arabi. For the doctrine of Ibn Sina, see Fazlur Rahman, "Ibn Sina", pp. 501-503, and Michael Marmura, "Some Aspects of Avicenna's Theory of God's Knowledge of Particulars," *JAOS* 82 (1962): 299-312.

¹³⁰*Inshā'*, p. 14.

¹³¹*Ibid.*

his theory of self-knowledge.

We have already seen how man acquires the knowledge of existents *in concreto* through sense-perception. However, according to Ibn 'Arabī, man can also know a certain type of non-existents, namely the non-existents whose existence is logically possible, such as "griffin" or "phoenix." If man's knowledge always follows sense-perception, and depends upon it, how can such a knowledge be possible? He solves this question by introducing the concept of *mithl*.¹³² He writes.

Knowledge relates itself to the non-existent by relating itself to the existing *mithl* of the non-existent.¹³³

The *mithl* primarily means the copy, i.e., the mental image created in the mind after the perception of the concrete object. Therefore, it can be considered an existent in knowledge, although not *in concreto*. Ibn 'Arabī further explains in more detail the *modus operandi* of man's knowledge of non-existents *in concreto* through *mithl*.

One of the conditions of knowledge's relation to the object of knowledge is that one single individual of that genus be existent [*in concreto*,] or parts of it be present scattered in different existents, through whose combination a new existent emerges [in the mind,] which you know while it remains non-existent *in concreto*. It [the new existent in the mind] serves as a copy (*mithl*) for the non-existent. Your knowledge therefore is only your vision's relation to that existent and to that reality (*ḥaqīqa*).¹³⁴

¹³²The concept of *mithl* is very close to that of *homoiōmata* in Aristotle's *Hermeneuticus* (16 a.8.) H. P. Cooke renders the latter in English as "likeness, images, copies." (Aristotle, *Categories, On Interpretations, Prior Analytics*, Loeb Classical Library [London, 1938], p. 115. In the Arabic translation of the *Hermeneuticus*, this term is rendered as *amthila* (pl. of *mithāl*.) (al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-Fārābī li-Kitāb Aristūṭālīs fī al-'Ibāra*, ed. by W. Kutsch and S. Marrow [Beirut, 1960], p. 27.) And al-Fārābī interprets the *amthila* of this passage as "images" (*ṣuwar*) and "fancies" (*khayālāt*.) *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹³³*Inshā'*, p. 13.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

Therefore, man's knowledge of a griffin is possible, because all the parts which constitute a griffin exist sporadically in different existents, and unlike the case of the absolute non-existent such as the partner of God, one can combine all the constituent parts, and the copy of a griffin thus created in the mind becomes the object of knowledge.

So far, man's knowledge of non-existents is discussed. However, as we have explained above, God does not have the perceptive knowledge of contingents. From the point of view of God, all contingents are non-existents. Therefore, His knowledge of contingents must operate on the same principle as man's knowledge of non-existents *in concreto*. In the following passage, Ibn 'Arabī explains God's knowledge of man and the universe, and it is here that Ibn 'Arabī introduces the *homo Imago Dei* motif.

You should know that but for the fact that man exists in the image ('*alā al-ṣūra*,) knowledge would not relate itself to him eternally (*azalan*,) because knowledge which relates itself to a temporal thing (*al-ḥādith*) eternally occurs and continues to occur only through the eternally existing image (*al-ṣūra al-mawjūda al-qadīma*) in which man is created. And the entire universe is created in the image of man. Therefore the universe also exists in the image in which man is created.¹³⁵

Although the above passage is somewhat enigmatic, it is clear that here the *homo imago Dei* motif is supplemented by the *mundus imago hominis* motif. God's eternal knowledge is related to the eternally existing image, which is nothing but the image of Himself. Although God does not have any perceptive knowledge of man and the universe, God's knowledge of them is possible through His knowledge of His image, because both man and the universe are created in His image. Thus we can conclude that the sole object of God's universal knowledge, the undifferentiated in which He can perceive the differentiated, is this "eternally existing

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 13.

image," i.e., His image. The above thought of Ibn 'Arabī that God knows only His image is actually very near to Ibn Sīnā's thought that God knows particular existents by knowing Himself. Indeed, Ibn 'Arabī states this identity of God's self-knowledge with His knowledge of the universe more explicitly in the *Uqlat al-Mustawfiz*. And the *imago Dei* *ḥadīth* is used in this context.

God knew Himself, then knew the universe. Therefore the universe came out in the image, and God created man as a noble compendium, in which He united the concepts (*ma'ānī*) of the greater world, and He made man a copy (*nuskha*) which unites both what lies in the greater world and the Divine Names which are in the Divine Presence. Concerning this, the Prophet said, "God created Adam in His image." For this reason, we say that the universe came out in the image.¹³⁶

In the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, the theory of self-knowledge is stated in a more general and ambiguous manner:

It is necessary that every knower without any exception and specification be an existent both in his mind (*fī nafsihi*) and *in concreto*, being a knower of himself and a perceiver of himself. Every other object of knowledge either exists in his [a knower's] image (*alā ṣūratihī*), in which case he [a knower] is a *mithl* [paradigm/copy] of it [that object of knowledge,] or exists in some part of his image. In this way, one becomes a knower of the objects of one's knowledge, because he is a knower of himself. And this self-knowledge governs the objects of knowledge.¹³⁷

The whole passage is unfortunately very obscure. One of the reasons for this obscurity is that Ibn 'Arabī here makes a vague general statement intentionally, so that it could be applied to both God's and man's knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze this passage in both cases separately.

First, when we apply the above passage to God's knowledge, his thought is as follows: God is a knower of Himself, a perceiver of Himself. Therefore, the first object of His knowledge is Himself. All

¹³⁶*Uqlat al-Mustawfiz*, p. 45.

¹³⁷*Inshā'*, p. 14.

objects of knowledge other than Himself either exist in His image entirely or in some part of His image. In the light of the *homo imago Dei* motif and *mundus imago hominis* motif, the object of knowledge which exists entirely in His image must be both man and the universe. However, this thought sounds strange. It is because in the case of God's knowledge, "copy" is obviously not an adequate translation of *mithl*. As was pointed out before, the exact meaning of *mithl* is the object of knowledge existing in the mind of the knower. In the case of man, *mithl* depends on sense-perception of the existent *in concreto*. On the other hand, in the case of God's eternal knowledge, the object of knowledge does not depend on sense-perception; on the contrary it is clearly stated that from the point of view of God, existence in knowledge precedes existence *in concreto*. Thus, in the case of God's knowledge, the best translation of the term *mithl* is "paradigm, model," and in this sense, it comes very close to the Platonic Idea (*mithāl*).¹³⁸

When we translate the term *mithl* by "paradigm," the above passage means that God Himself is the model and paradigm of man and the universe. On the other hand, we know from the previous passage that God's sole object of knowledge is "the eternally existing image." Therefore the model of man and the universe is nothing else but the eternally existing image of God. As we have seen in the first section, this is the familiar doctrine in the Judeo-Christian tradition of the theology of the image. Also in Gnosticism and the early Christian fathers, the term *eikōn* is used in both ways: the heavenly *Urmensch* in Gnosticism and Christ the *Logos* in Christianity are called *eikōn* in the meaning of

¹³⁸The term "Platonic Ideas" is rendered in Arabic as *al-muthul al-Aflātūniya* (pl. of *mithāl*,) e.g., al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Jam' bayna Ra'ay al-Ḥakīmāyn*, ed by A.N. Nadīr (Beirut, 1960), p. 105. It is interesting to note that Aristotle's *homoiōmata* is rendered as *amthila*, another plural form of *mithāl*. See *supra*, n. 132.

"model, original," and also the earthly man is called *eikōn* in the meaning of "copy" of the heavenly *Urmensch* or the *Logos*. In the same manner, Ibn 'Arabī calls man who is created in His image *mithl* (copy.) In other words, the image of God is a paradigm, model (*mithl*) of man, and man is a copy (*mithl*) of His image. Ibn 'Arabī writes: "*mithl* is man, and also it is the image in which he is created."¹³⁹

In this way, Ibn 'Arabī interprets Ibn Sīnā's thought that God only knows Himself as "God knows His Image." As he follows Ibn Sīnā in his assertion that God's self-knowledge, that is, His knowledge of His image, is identical with His knowledge of particulars, that is, His knowledge of man and the universe.

Lastly, as for the objects of knowledge which exist in some part of His image, they must be particular existents in the universe. They are known through the differentiated which God perceives in the undifferentiated, that is, in His image, though He does not have any direct perception of them.

The above argument is basically Ibn 'Arabī's modification of Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of God's self-knowledge. However, Ibn 'Arabī emphasizes that the above *modus operandi* of knowledge is not only applicable to God, but also to man. In other words, he tries to establish that in the case of man, too, self-knowledge is identical with his knowledge of the universe. It is interesting to note that Ghazzālī pointed out the absurdity of Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of the self-knowledge of God by applying it to human knowledge.

Is God's knowledge of all the species and *genera*, whose number is unlimited, identical with His self-knowledge, or not?
 . . . but if you say that it is identical, why should you not have yourself classed with one who claims that man's knowledge

¹³⁹Ibn 'Arabī, *Iṣṭilāḥ al-Šūfīya*, p. 16 in the *Rasā'il Ibn 'Arabī*, 2, (Hyderabad, 1948).

of what is other than himself is identical with his self-knowledge and with his essence? And he who makes this statement must be a fool.¹⁴⁰

However, it is this "foolish" statement that Ibn 'Arabī is making here.

Because of the parallelism between the *homo imago Dei* motif and the *mundus imago hominis* motif, the application of the doctrine of self-knowledge to man seems easy. Since the entire universe is created in the image of man, the object of knowledge which exists in his whole image must be the entire universe. Therefore man is the model and paradigm of the universe. The objects of knowledge which exist in some part of his image must be particular existents of the universe, for the image in which the universe is created must contain every particular existent in the universe. Thus, like God, man can know all the particular existents of the universe contained in his image by knowing his image. If man is the model of the universe, particular existents contained in his image must also be models of particular existents *in concreto*. He can know models of particular existents contained in his image only by perceiving and knowing his image.

But here a difficulty arises. The above thought is apparently contradictory to his previous empiricist view that from the point of view of man, existence *in concreto* precedes existence in knowledge. As we have already pointed out, in the case of man's knowledge *mithl* should be interpreted as "copy," not as "model, paradigm." This basic difference between God's knowledge and man's knowledge seems to disappear, and they become completely identical. Although Ibn 'Arabī does not solve this contradiction explicitly, it seems that he alluded to the solution in his distinction between undifferentiated knowledge and differentiated

¹⁴⁰Ghazzālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, trans. by Sabih Ahmad Kamali (Lahore, 1963), p. 115.

knowledge. On the basis of this distinction, his solution should be as follows: although the object of knowledge in the mind of man, that is, his image in which the universe is created, contains all the particulars of the phenomenal universe potentially, it is still not yet differentiated. Only when one sees a tree *in concreto*, for instance, through this tree, is the undifferentiated in his mind differentiated. To use his own expression, man can know the undifferentiated, that is, his image differentiatedly only through the temporal particular existents in the phenomenal universe.

Now that we have examined his doctrine of self-knowledge, we can understand the commonness of knowledge between God and man more clearly. Man's knowledge of his image, the undifferentiated, is nothing else but "the reality of realities," i.e., the undifferentiated knowledge of God. This is the true meaning of his description of man as the synthesis of all the realities of the universe. However, unlike God, man cannot differentiate the realities inherent in him except through sense-perception of particular existents *in concreto*. Ibn 'Arabi writes:

This [the reality of realities] is the universal mother to all the existents, and it is intelligible in the mind, but not existent *in concreto* . . . it is in existents as a reality which is neither divided, nor increased, nor diminished. Its existence is from the emergence of particular existents, both eternal and temporal. If it were not for concrete existents, we would not comprehend it, for if it were not for them, we would not comprehend the realities of existents. Although its existence depends on the existence of individuals, the knowledge of individuals in a differentiated way depends on the knowledge of it, since whoever does not know it cannot distinguish among existents. We would say, for instance, that inorganic things, angels, and the eternal are one and the same thing, since one does not know realities, and thus one does not know with what he can distinguish existents from each other.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹*Inshā'*, pp. 35-36.

Thus, in the case of man's knowledge of the universe, realities inherent in him and existents *in concreto* are interdependent; we could not comprehend realities differentiatedly if it were not for existents *in concreto*, but we could not really know existents *in concreto* if the realities of the universe were not inherent in us beforehand, albeit undifferentiatedly.

So far we have seen how Ibn 'Arabī combined the *homo imago Dei* motif with the doctrine of self-knowledge. However, although in the above account the identification of man's self-knowledge and his knowledge of the universe is established, another important element in the doctrine of self-knowledge, namely the Delphic motif (the identification of man's self-knowledge and his knowledge of God) is lacking. In the following passage, he succinctly combines the *homo imago Dei* motif, the doctrine of self-knowledge, and the Delphic motif. This passage can be said to be the most subtle and elaborate treatment of the *Imago Dei* motif.

If someone exists in the image of something, then this something is also in his image, so that by the single act of seeing one's own image, he sees the one who exists in his image (*man hūwa 'alā šūratihī,*) and by the single act of knowing himself, he knows the one who exists in his image (*man hūwa 'alā šūratihī.*)¹⁴²

The above passage is, like the previous passage, expressed in such general terms that it can be applied to both God and man. In the case of God, the first part of the passage alludes to the *Imago Dei* *ḥadīth*. But Ibn 'Arabī goes further and suggests that as man exists in the image of God, so does God in the image of man. Since the image of God and that of man are the same, by the single act of seeing His own image, He sees man who is created in His image and the universe which is in

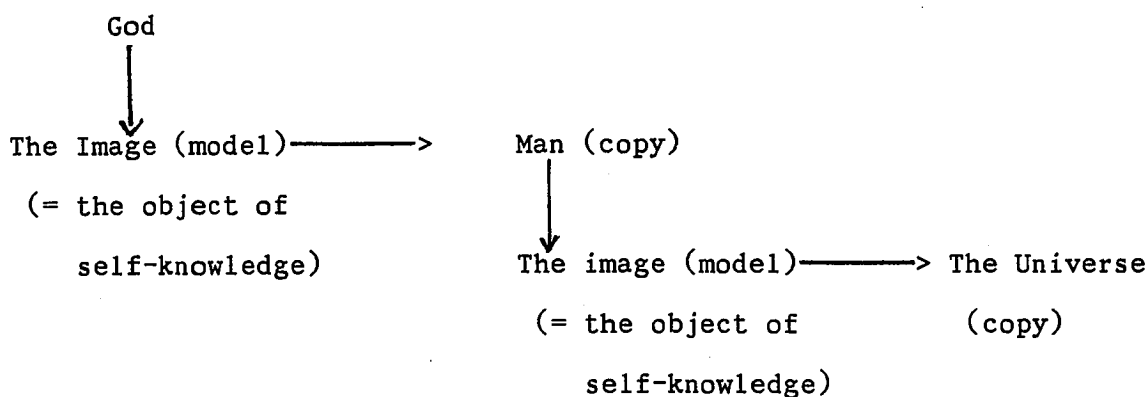
¹⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 15.

turn created in man's image. By the single act of knowing Himself, He knows both man and the universe.

In the case of man this passage can be interpreted in two ways, that is, with respect to man's relation to the universe, and to God, because of man's intermediary position between God and the universe. And these two interpretations are possible due to the ambiguity of the phrase *man hūwa 'alā šūratihī* which allows two different translations. With respect to man's relation to the universe, the phrase must be translated as in the above quotation. The universe exists in the image of man, and man in the image of the universe, and because of this correspondence, man's self-knowledge amounts to his knowledge of the universe. However, as was pointed out previously, man's detailed knowledge of the universe needs existents *in concreto* in the universe. Therefore, it would be more adequate to say in the case of man that his knowledge of the universe amounts to his knowledge of himself.

In the second respect, namely in man's relation to God, the phrase must be translated by "(he sees/knows) the one in whose image he exists." Then the whole passage means the identification of man's knowledge of himself with his knowledge of God. If we combine the above two cases, we can conclude that man's knowledge of the universe amounts to his knowledge of himself, and this self-knowledge is nothing else but his knowledge of God. In this way, man's knowledge of the universe, of himself, and of God coincide.

In this section, we have seen how his epistemology uses the *Imago Dei* motif. We can schematize the relation between God, man, and the universe as follows:



Theory of the Divine Names

As we have seen in the first part, Adam, the symbol of man, is characterized by Ibn 'Arabī as the synthesis of the Divine Names and the realities of the universe. Since we have examined the meaning of the synthesis of the realities of the universe in the previous section, in this section we would like to clarify the function of the Names of God in his metaphysics and elucidate what Ibn 'Arabī meant by the "synthesis of the Divine Names."

First of all, Ibn 'Arabī interprets the image of God in the *Imago Dei ḥadīth* as the Names of God. In the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, he writes:

For this reason, he [the Prophet] said concerning the creation of Adam, who is the exemplar (*barnāmaj*) which unites the descriptions (*nu'ūt*) of the Divine Presence (*ḥaḍra ilāhīya*) that is, the Essence (*dhāt*), the Attributes (*ṣifāt*), and the Actions (*af'āl*), "God created Adam in His image." And His image is nothing but the Divine Presence.¹⁴³

From the above quotation it is clear that the image in which Adam was created is the Divine Presence, whose descriptions are the Essence, the Attributes, and the Actions. These are the three classes of the Divine Names. Thus, like in Ghazzālī, the Divine Presence means the domain of the Divine Names. Also in another part of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Ibn 'Arabī states clearly that the image of God comprises the Names of

¹⁴³*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 199.

God.¹⁴⁴ In *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*, the identification of the Image of God with the Divine Names is stated in the following way:

All the Divine Names are bound to him [man=Adam] without one single exception. Thus, Adam came out in the image of the Name *Allāh*, because this name comprises all the Divine Names.¹⁴⁵

The origin of this identification seems to go back to Shiblī. And as we have seen in Rūzbihān Baqlī and Ghazzālī, the *Imago Dei* *ḥadīth* was always interpreted as the commonness of the names between man and God. As Abū al-Qāsim al-Gorgānī, Ghazzālī's teacher in Sufism, said, all the ninety-nine Names of God are applicable also to man.¹⁴⁶ Sometimes this commonness is thought to be an indication of man's moral obligation to imitate the godly character, as we have seen in Ghazzālī. This thought is not lacking in Ibn ʿArabī. In *al-Tadbīr-āt al-Ilāhīya*, he writes:

It is necessary for this vicegerent to imitate the Names of the One who appointed him as the vicegerent, so that that [i.e., the godly character] may appear in the character of his subjects and their actions.¹⁴⁷

Ibn ʿArabī says that he even composed a small treatise on the subject of the imitation of the Divine Names.

Sometimes the commonness of the names is thought to be the means to acquire the knowledge of God. Thus, the commonness of the names provided the basis for the theory of identification of man's self-knowledge and his knowledge of God, which is suggested in the Delphic *ḥadīth*. We have already seen the elaborate theory of Ghazzālī in this aspect. This thought is also not lacking in Ibn ʿArabī. In *al-Tadbīrāt al-I-*

¹⁴⁴ *Fuṣūṣ*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁵ *Futūḥāt*, 2:124.

¹⁴⁶ Ghazzālī, *Maqṣad*, p. 162.

¹⁴⁷ *Tadbīrāt*, p. 145.

lāhīya, he divides the Divine Names into positive ones and negative ones, the latter indicating the Essence. As for the former, he writes as follows:

God is existent (*mawjūd*,) and we are also existents (*mawjūdūn*,) and if there were no knowledge of our existence, we would not know the meaning of existence, in order to say that the Creator is existent. Thus, when He created in us "knowledge," we acknowledge Knowledge in God. In this way, we acknowledge Life in God through our life, and Hearing, Seeing, and Speech through our [hearing, seeing] and speech, although not through our voices, and our letters. Power, Will, and other Names of richness, generosity, goodness, forgiveness, and mercy are existent in us. When He names Himself to us with these Names, we understand them. We do not understand them except through those He created in us.¹⁴⁸

And it is in this context that the Delphic *hadīth* is quoted. Through the names or qualities which God created in us, we can know the meanings of the Divine Names.

Besides these traditional Sufi doctrines of the commonness of the names, the Divine Names have a cosmological function in Ibn 'Arabī. In order to understand this function, first we must examine his doctrine of the Divine Names.

Ibn 'Arabī's theory of the Divine Names is, like those of Ḥallāj and Ghazzālī, based on the theory of the Divine Attributes of the Ash'arites. According to them, the Divine Attributes are neither identical with nor separate from the Divine Essence. This characteristic definition is quite suitable to the concept of the "image." As we have seen in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the "image of God" is frequently used to express at the same time both the essential sameness with and difference from God Himself. In other words, the image of God is neither identical with nor separate from God.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 208.

First, he distinguishes the Attributes and the Names as follows. All the Attributes of God are realities, namely, the universal, intelligible concepts.¹⁴⁹ Also they are called "the realities of the Divine Names" (*ḥaqā'iq al-asmā'*), that is, the meanings which the Divine Names have and through which they distinguish themselves from each other.¹⁵⁰

Secondly, the Names of God are relations (*nisab*) and modes (*aḥwāl*) which are neither existent nor non-existent.¹⁵¹ In relation to God, they are identical with his Essence, therefore in God the Names are not yet differentiated, and the Name "Benefactor" (*mun'im*) is identical with the Name "Punisher" (*mu'adhdhib*).¹⁵² On the other hand, in relation to the abstract concepts which they convey, that is, in relation to their "realities," they are different from each other.

Every Name indicates the Essence and the [particular] concept (*ma'nā*) which it conveys and which it requires. With respect to its indication of the Essence, each Name comprises all other Names. With respect to its indication of the [particular] concept through which it is distinguished, it is different from other Names . . . The Name is identical with the Named with respect to the Essence; it is not identical with the Named with respect to the special concept which it conveys.¹⁵³

However, this differentiation of the Names remains potential in God; only through the creation of the universe are they actually differentiated, since these Names are meaningless without the universe: the Name "Creator" requires the existence of a creature and the Name "Forgiver" requires the existence of the forgiven.¹⁵⁴ In this sense, the Divine

¹⁴⁹*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 52.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹⁵²*Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 2:130.

¹⁵³*Fuṣūṣ*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁵⁴S.A.Q. Husaini, *The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn al-ʿArabi* (Lahore,

Names are the agents of the creation of the universe. God Himself does not need the universe, it is the desire of the Divine Names to manifest themselves in the universe and differentiate themselves from each other which made God create the universe.

God relieved the Divine Names from the distress in which they found themselves because of the non-manifestation of their effects.¹⁵⁵

Thus this phenomenal universe is the manifestation of the Divine Names, and every existent in the universe is the manifestation of God's particular Names. Also in the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, he writes:

When we inquire which force operates in this universe, we find that it is the Beautiful Names who manifested themselves (*ẓaharat*) in this universe completely and entirely. These Names realized themselves in this universe through their effects (*āthār*) and predications (*aḥkām*,) not through their essences (*dhawāt*,) but through their copies (*amthāl*,) not through their realities (*ḥaqā'iq*,) but through their subtle bonds (*raqā'iq*).¹⁵⁶

The terms "predications" and "copies" suggest the Divine Names' function as Platonic Ideas, which are the objects of predications and paradigms of earthly existents. It is in this meaning that he says that the universe is created in the image of God.

We have discussed in the previous section the concept of realities in Ibn 'Arabī. Here, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between the Divine Names and the realities. In *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya* it is

1970), p. 156. Nyberg also writes, quoting Sha'rānī: "A *khālīq* (creator) without a *makhhlūq* (creature,) a *qāhīr* (conqueror) without a *maqḥūr* (conquered,) *qādīr* (overpowerful) without a *maqḍūr* (overpowered,) a *raḥīm* (merciful) without a *marḥūm* (recipient of mercy) are unthinkable, both pre-existentially and existentially, both potentially and actually." (Nyberg, *Kleinere Schriften*, p. 61, quoting Sha'rānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhīr fī Bayān 'Aqā'id al-Akābīr*, 2 vols. [Cairo, A. H. 1305], 1:48).

¹⁵⁵ *Fuṣūṣ*, p. 145.

¹⁵⁶ *Inshā'*, p. 32.

said that every reality has a corresponding Name of God.¹⁵⁷ However, it is not very clear what Divine Name corresponds to the reality of woodness, for instance. In the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, Ibn 'Arabī suggests that the reality of realities as a whole is God's Attribute of Knowledge.¹⁵⁸ And thus it corresponds to the Name "Knower." On the other hand, as we have seen, the realities are universals, and like the theory of universals in Ibn Sīnā, the realities have three modes of existence.¹⁵⁹ First they are eternally in the mind of God as His knowledge, secondly they are manifest in particular existents in the universe, and thirdly, in man's mind as his knowledge. In the mind of God, they are not yet differentiated, and only through the universe are they differentiated, and the realities in the mind of God are the paradigms and models of particular existents in the universe. Thus functionally the realities in the mind of God can be interpreted as the Names of God. In other words, the reality of woodness eternally existing in the mind of God is one of the Divine Names. In this way, man as the synthesis of all the realities of the universe expresses the same thing as man as the synthesis of all the Divine Names. The universals inherent in man are in relation to God the manifestations of the Divine Names and in relation to the universe the realities of the universe.

¹⁵⁷*Futūḥāt* (ed. Yahya) 3:24-25.

¹⁵⁸*Inshā'*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁹H. A. Wolfson, "Avicenna, Algazali and Averroes on Divine Attributes," in *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, ed. I. Twersky and G. H. Williams, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), 1:145-47. For the same doctrine in Thomas Aquinas, see Rudolf Allers, "Intellectual Cognition," in *Essays in Thomism*, ed. R. E. Brennan (New York, 1942), p. 53.

Although the universe as a whole is the perfect manifestation of all the Divine Names, in each existent of the universe except man, they are not manifest in their entirety, because no existent has all the realities. For instance, a white dog has the reality of dogness and the reality of whiteness, but does not have the reality of woodness. However, only in man are all the Divine Names manifest, because man as a microcosm has all the realities of the universe within him. And because of these realities, only man among all existents can know all the existents of the universe.

Anthropocentrism

In Ibn 'Arabi, man is the link which connects the Divine Names still unmanifested, that is, the realities of the universe still undifferentiated and the differentiated, particular existents of the universe. The Divine Names need man in order to be fully differentiated in the universe, because man's knowledge of the universe through the realities inherent in him is essential to the differentiation of the universe. Ibn 'Arabi seems to think that, if man were not in the universe, a tree would not even be a tree, and a mountain not a mountain. In the beginning of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, he compares the universe before the creation of man to an unpolished mirror, a kind of *materia prima*, a soundless, colorless, shapeless world.¹⁶⁰ Only through man is the universe polished and able to reflect the image of God. Furthermore, man is com-

¹⁶⁰*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 49. T. Burckhardt explains "the unpolished mirror" in the following way: "C'est le chaos primordial, où les possibilités de manifestation, encore virtuelles, se confondent dans l'indifférenciation de leur materia." (Ibn 'Arabi, *La Sagesse des Prophètes* (*Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*), trans. T. Burckhardt [Paris, 1974], p. 22, n.7.)

pared to the pupil (*insān*) of the eye through which God sees His creation.¹⁶¹ The purpose of the creation is God's desire to see Himself outside Himself,¹⁶² and this is only achieved through man. In this sense, man is the image of the Image of God, the mirror in which the Image of God is most perfectly reflected.

The anthropocentrism of Ibn 'Arabī is most explicitly stated in the following words from the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*.

Man has absolute perfection both in eternity and in temporality. God has the absolute perfection in eternity, but He has no access to temporality, since He is too exalted. The universe has absolute perfection in temporality, but it has no access to eternity, since it is too low for it.¹⁶³

God cannot have direct contact with the created universe, except through man. But man has correspondences both to God through His Names, and the universe through its realities. Of course, it is not meant that man is in any sense superior to God, because it is God's absolute transcendence which prevents Him from enjoying the perfection in temporality, but still it is not God but man who is the center of all the existents. And this absolute perfection of man is symbolized by Ibn 'Arabī with the phrase "the Perfect Man."

¹⁶¹*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 50.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁶³*Inshā'*, p. 22.

CHAPTER II

MICROCOSM AND MACROCOSM IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT

In the previous chapter, we have investigated the development of Adam speculation in Islam, and we have found that in several interpretations of the *Imago Dei ḥadīth*, the macrocosm-microcosm motif is connected with it. In this chapter we focus on this motif in Islam, especially the macrocosm doctrine of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', and show their influences on Ghazzālī and Ibn ʿArabī.

The macrocosm-microcosm motif has a long history. Rudolf Allers in his interesting survey of this motif in Western philosophy distinguished six variations: elementaristic; structural; holistic; symbolistic; psychological; and metaphorical.¹ Although all the six variations are found in Islamic thought, we deal in this chapter with the first five variations. Also we must not forget the following words of Allers after his classification. "It is rare that any of these interpretations, with the exception of the last named [i.e., metaphorical,] is found in pure form. The usual thing is to encounter a number of various combinations. The single interpretations mingle and overlap."²

Origin of the Microcosm Theory in Islamic Thought

It is most plausible that the macrocosm-microcosm motif was brought into Islam with Pythagoreanism.³ Shahrastānī in his *al-Mīlāl wa al-Niḥāl* transmits the following words of Pythagoras.

¹Rudolf Allers, "Microcosmus: from Anaximandros to Paracelsus," *Traditio*, 2 (1944), pp. 319-407.

²*Ibid.*, p. 331.

³Concerning the microcosm-macrocosm theory of Pythagoras, see *ibid.*,

Man stands in correspondence to (*muqābala*) the entire universe by virtue of his natural disposition (*fiṭra*), and he is a microcosm (*‘ālam ṣaḡhīr*), and the universe is a big man (*insān kabīr*). Therefore his luck (*ḥazz*) pertaining to the soul and the intellect became more ample (*awfar*). Thus, whoever improves the soul and refines the character and purifies his conditions (*aḥwāl*) can reach the knowledge of the universe and the manner (*kayfiya*) of its composition.⁴

It must be noted in this connection that the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', who developed the most elaborate macrocosm-microcosm theory in Islam, is generally recognized as the representative of Muslim Neo-Pythagoreanism.⁵

The first who developed this motif in Islam is Kindī.⁶ He also admits that it is the ancient sages of foreign origin (lit. the people who are not of our language, *ghayr ahl lisāninā*) who called man the microcosm. Then he continues as follows:

pp. 341-43, and George Perrigo Conger, *Theories of Macrocosm and Microcosm in the History of Philosophy* (New York, 1922), pp. 2-3. The ultimate origin of this theory seems to be traced in ancient Iran. cf. Albrecht Götze, "Persische Weisheit in Griechischem Gewande. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Mikrokosmos-Idee," *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik*, 2 (1923): 60-98, 167-177.

⁴Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Muḥamad, 3 vols. (Cairo, 1968), 2:138.

⁵For instance, in Majid Fakhry's *A History of Islamic Philosophy* Second Edition, (New York and London, 1983), the chapter on the Ikhwān is entitled "Neo-Pythagoreanism and Popularization of the Philosophical Sciences." Seyyed Hossein Nasr says in *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Revised Edition, Boulder, 1978): "The Ikhwān claim again and again that they are the followers of the tradition of Pythagoras and Nicomachus . . ." (p. 37.) See also I. R. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists, An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity*. (London, 1982), pp. 9-16.

⁶George N. Atiyeh in *Al-Kindī, The Philosopher of the Arabs* (Rawalpindi, 1966) says that the trend of the small treatise, "On the Soul, Abridged from the Book of Aristotle and Plato and from the Other Philosophers," is, in spite of its title, Neo-Pythagorean and Platonic. (p. 100.) See also C. Baffioni, "La scala pitagorica in al-Kindī," in *Studi in onore di Francesco Gabrieli*, ed. Renato Traini, 2 vols. (Rome, 1984), 1:35-41.

In him [man,] there are all the forces (*quwā*) which exist in the universe (*al-kull*), namely, growth (*namā'*), animality (*ḥayawānīya*), and rationality (*mantiqīya*). In him there is earthness (*arḍīya*) like bones and similar things; wateryness (*mā'īya*) like the moistures (*ruṭūbāt*) which exist in it like veins and liquid-filled parts (*naqā'*) of veins, the stomach, the bladder and other similar parts; the fixed minerals (*al-ma'ādīn al-mabniya*) and gum (*samgha*) like the brain and nerves; and air within his interior and hollow parts; fire like the innate heat; plants like his hair; animals like worms generating in his interior and outside. Natural phenomena similar to those which take place in the sublunary sphere like rain, thunder, wind, eclipse, rainbow, earthquake and so forth, all have similar things in him, . . . And only in man are found all these things in their entirety.⁷

The correspondences which are enumerated in the above passage reappear in the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, Ghazzālī, and Ibn 'Arabī.⁸ In the above passage, it is said that all the three forces which exist in the universe are also found in man. Growth is the characteristic of the plant, animality that of animals, and rationality that of angels.⁹ Therefore man comprises plantness, animality, and angelic nature.

His concept of man as the microcosm is closely connected with the motif of self-knowledge. In *al-Risāla fī Ḥudūd al-Ashyā' wa Rusū-mīhā*, he gives six definitions of "philosophy." The one which seems to represent his own idea runs as follows:

Philosophy is man's knowledge (*ma'rifa*) of himself. This saying is extremely noble and profound. For example, I say: Things (*ashyā'*) are either bodies or non-bodies; what are non-bodies are either substances (*jawāhīr*) or accidents; man consists of the body, the soul, and the accidents; the soul is

⁷ *Rasā'il al-Kindī al-Falsafīya*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Riḍā, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1950-53), 1:260-61. Cf. George N. Atiyeh, "Al-Kindī's Concept of Man," *Hamdard Islamicus* 3 (1980):39.

⁸ *Infra*, p. 89; pp. 99-103.

⁹ Kindi defines humanity (*insānīya*) as life, rationality, and death; angelhood as life and rationality; animality as life and death (*Rasā'il*, 1:179.) As is pointed out by Alfred L. Ivry in *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics: A Translation of Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī's Treatise "On First Philosophy," (fī al-Falsafa al-Ulā)* (Albany, 1974; p. 141), the definition is derived from Dimashqī's translation of Porphyry's *Isagoge*.

a substance and a non-body; if man knows himself (lit. his essence, *dhātahu*,) he knows the body with his accidents, the first accident¹⁰ and the substance which is non-body. Consequently if he knows all this, he knows everything. For this, the sages called man the microcosm.¹¹

Like all the Neo-Platonists, Kindī separates the body and the soul sharply. The soul is of divine nature. However, the relation between God and the soul is not explained through the *Imago Dei ḥadīth*, but through the metaphor of the sun and the sunshine.¹² He even compares the soul to God. Just as God directs the universe, so the soul directs the body.¹³ The same comparison is used by Ghazzālī in *al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr*, as we have seen in the previous chapter.¹⁴

Microcosm Theory of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā

Kindī's idea of the microcosm found the most eager supporter in the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'.¹⁵ As Conger pointed out, they developed the most

¹⁰"The first generic accident which is divided into quantity, quality and relation, together with the remaining six compound accidents which derive from the composition of substance with the three accidents." (D. Gimaret's commentary in *Al-Kindī, Cinq Épîtres* (Paris, 1976), p. 60, quoting Isaac Israeli's commentary in Altmann and Stern, *Isaac Israeli* (Oxford, 1958), p. 27.

¹¹Kindī, *Rasā'il*, 1:173.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 273. Cf. Atiyeh, *Al-Kindī*, pp. 100-101. Although W. Montgomery Watt in "Created in His Image," p. 45, suggests that there is a relation between the passage, "The soul is united with a *ṣūra* from the light of the creator," (*Rasā'il*, I. p. 276) and the *Imago Dei ḥadīth*, the allusion to the *Imago Dei ḥadīth* is not clear.

¹³Kindī, *Rasā'il*, 1:74. Cf. Atiyeh, "Concept of Man," p. 39; *Cinq Épîtres*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁴*Supra*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁵Kindī seems to be one of the sources of the Ikhwān. For instance, the doctrine of the six voices is taken by them from Kindī. (Atiyeh, *Al-Kindī*, p. 36; Netton, p. 30; 48.) Also it is interesting to know that the passage of the *Rasā'il* of the Ikhwān is incorporated in the British Museum manuscript of Kindī's *Fī Ḥudūd al-Ashyā' wa Rusūmihā* (S. M. Stern, "Notes on al-Kindī's Treatise on Definitions," *JRAS*, (1959), pp. 36-37.) Although Atiyeh says in *Al-Kindī*, p. 146, that Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakshī, student of Kindī, was probably a member of the Ikhwān, I do not know the ground for his surmise.

elaborate doctrine of the macrocosm-microcosm before Paracelsus and they put this doctrine at the center of their whole philosophical system.¹⁶ It is no exaggeration to say that their whole cosmology and anthropology are based on this idea, and their influence is extensive on later Islamic thought.¹⁷

The Theory of the Soul

According to the Ikhwān, all existents are divided into the universal (*al-kullī*) and the particular (*al-juz'ī*)¹⁸ thus the soul is also divided into the universal and the particular soul. The former, which is called also "the *anima mundi*" (*nafs al-ʿālam*) is the third from God in the successive chain of emanation,¹⁹ just like the famous triad of Plotinus. Partial souls (*nufūs* or *anfus juz'īya*,) among which are human souls, are faculties of the universal soul. The universal soul governs the whole universe in the same manner as the human soul governs the whole body,²⁰ although, in the case of the universal soul, it is outside the universe.

¹⁶Conger, p. 48; pp. 50-51.

¹⁷A. L. Tibawi, "Ikhwān As-Ṣafā and Their Rasā'il -- A Critical Review of a Century and a Half of Research," in *Arabic and Islamic Themes: Historical, Educational, and Literary Studies* (London, 1976), pp. 179-80. Especially concerning their influences on Ghazzālī, see Susanne Diwald, *Arabische Philosophie und Wissenschaft in der Enzyklopädie: Kitab Ihwān as-ṣafā' (III) Die Lehre von Seele und Intellekt* (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 7, and Margaret Smith's introduction and commentary on her translation of Ghazzālī's *Al-Risālat Al-Ladunīyya*, *JRAS* (1938) pp. 177-200; pp. 353-374.

¹⁸Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Rasā'il*, 4 vols. (Beirut, n.d.), 3:359.

¹⁹Concerning their system of emanation, see Geo Widengren, "The Pure Brethren and the Philosophical Structure of Their System," in *Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge*, ed. Alford T. Welch and Pierre Cachia (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 57-69.

²⁰Ikhwān, *Rasā'il*, 2:477.

Sometimes particular souls are further classified in the hierarchical order into simple souls (*anfus basīṭa*), the souls of the *genera* the souls of the species; and particular souls, i.e., the souls of individuals.²¹ They explain their relations by comparing them to the numerical system. The universal soul is like the unit, i.e., the number one, the simple souls are like digits; the souls of the *genera*, tens; the souls of species, hundreds; the particular souls, thousands.²² Elsewhere, they explain the lower souls as the functions (*quwā*) of the higher soul(s) in the following way.

When we say "the simple souls," we mean by it the faculties of the universal soul, which moves these bodies [heavenly bodies,] directs and permeates them. We call these faculties in our writing the angels and the spiritual beings (*rūḥāniyūn*.) When we say "the animal souls, the plant souls and the mineral souls" (*al anfus al ḥayawāniya wa al-nabāṭiyya wa al-ma'dāniyya*), we mean by these the faculties of the simple souls, which move these generated bodies (*al-ajsām al-muwallada*, i.e., the mineral, the plant, and the animal,) direct and permeate them . . . When we say "the moving particular souls" (*al-anfus al-juz'iyya al-mutaḥarrika*), we mean by these the faculties of the animal souls, plant souls, and mineral souls, which permeate the particular bodies [i.e., individual,] move and direct them.²³

In the above passage, the animal souls, the plant souls, and the mineral souls correspond to the souls of the *genera*, while the souls of the species are missing. Also, as is clear from the above passage, the simple souls are the souls of heavenly bodies, and they are identical with angels.

Although the soul of the human genus is not mentioned in the above passage, it is nevertheless the highest of all the souls of the *genera*, and is called "the universal, human rational soul" (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqā*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3:216.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 3:213.

al-insāniya al kulliya.) The term appears in the famous controversy between the animals and man before the King of the Jinn, which occupies a large part in the middle of the *Rasā'il*. Here the sage of the Jinn speaks of the angels which guard and guide animals.

There is no genus of animals nor species nor individual, whether it be large or small, in charge of whom God did not put angels who educate, preserve, and supervise them in all their behavior. And this is the greatest mercy, kindness and affection from the side of the parents toward their small children and their weak issues.²⁴

The angels of the animals in the above passage are the souls of the *genera*, species and individuals of animals. All the particular souls are, if separately considered, angels of the particular things which they move and direct. In other words, they can be said to be the guardian angels of particular things, although generally the Ikhwān use the term "angels" for the souls of the heavenly bodies. Then the King asks him who is the leader (*ra'īs*) of the angels (*muqarrabūn*) who are in charge of human beings and preserve them and supervise their affairs. The sage answers.

It is the universal, human, rational soul which is the vicegerent of God on earth. It was connected with the body of Adam, when he was created from dust, and to him all the angels prostrated themselves altogether. They [i.e., angels] are the animal souls who submit themselves in obedience toward the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) which remains up to our time in the descendants of Adam, just as the physical shape of the body (*ṣūra al-jasad al-jismāniya*) remains in his descendants up to our time. With it they grow and develop, succeed, are rewarded and admonished and to it they return . . . , and with it they enter Paradise, and with it they ascend to the world of the heavens (*ʿālam al-aflāk*.) I mean the ascension of the rational soul who is the vicegerent of God on earth.²⁵

²⁴*Ibid.*, 2:343.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 2:343.

The universal, human, rational soul is the guardian angel of human beings in the same sense that the animal souls are guardian angels of animals. It is the generic soul of man, and when it is connected with individual bodies of man, it becomes the rational soul in man.²⁶ Yves Marquet interprets this "universal, human, rational soul" as the celestial Adam of the Isma'ilis.²⁷ Although it is called "the vicegerent of God on earth," and the prostration of the angels is mentioned, there is no dichotomy of the celestial Adam and the terrestrial Adam, nor any myth of the fall of the celestial Adam, both of which exist in Isma'ilism.²⁸ The Ikhwān use the Qur'anic Adam only as a symbol of the generic soul of man.

According to Yves Marquet, there is still another term which refers to the celestial Adam.²⁹ This is "the form of forms" (*ṣūra al-ṣuwar*) which appears in the section, "On the Explanation (*bayān*) of What Is Known through the Principles (*awā'il*) of Intellects," in the first epistle of the Fourth Book. In this section, the Ikhwān try to explain why men are different in their intellectual ability. One of the reasons they mention is as follows.

All the characteristics (*khisāl*) and virtues (*manāqib*) cannot be gathered in one single individual. Because of this, they are scattered (*furriqat*) in all the individuals (*ash-khās*) of human being (*insān*) with their multiplicity. However they [individuals] never go outside the form (*ṣūra*) of

²⁶The rational soul here must be one of the Platonic tripartite divisions of the soul. Immediately after the passage quoted, they say that Iblis who refused to prostrate himself to Adam is the irascible and the concupiscent faculties and the "soul commanding to evil."

²⁷Yves Marquet, *La Philosophie des Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* (Algiers, 1973), pp. 209-210.

²⁸Concerning the doctrine of the celestial Adam in Isma'ilism, see Henry Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*. vol. 1 only published (Paris, 1964), pp. 65-66.

²⁹Marquet, *La philosophie*, p. 209.

the human being, which is one of the forms under the sphere of the moon, and the form of forms (*ṣūra al-ṣuwar.*) Because of this, you see him [man] in perfect equilibrium (*i'tidāl*) in the condition of his innate nature (*fiṭra.*) Then his good and evil habits (*ʿādāt*) remove him from this [original equilibrium,] and they become his [second] nature . . . Know that this form [of forms] is the vicegerent of God on earth governing the animals, the plants, and the minerals . . . This is the unitary form, even though its individuals are many. The control (*ḥukm*) of this form over all the individual men is like the control of the form of the soul (*ṣūra nafsīhī*) over all the members of the body of one single man. This [the form of the soul] governs each member, each joint, each sense of his entire body from the day of birth to the day of separation [i.e., death.] In this manner, this form [of forms] governs all individuals of the human being (*bashar,*) both ancestors (*awwalīn*) and descendants (*ākharīn*) from the day God created heavens and earth. And Adam made of dust (*turābī,*) the father of the human being, has the control and predominance (*rubūbiya*) in everything which is on earth to the day of the Resurrection. "And all the angels prostrated themselves altogether." [15/30]³⁰

The "form of forms" can be interpreted as the generic form of man. It is the form of man in the Aristotelian sense, that is "humanity," which is individualized in each man. And this is also identical with the "universal, human, rational soul" as Y. Marquet thought.

The above contrast between the generic form or soul of man versus individual men is expressed by the Ikhwān with the set of terms, "universal, absolute man" (*insān muṭlaq kullī*) and "particular man" (*insān juz'ī.*) Some scholars have considered the term *insān kullī* as the origin of Ibn ʿArabī's term, *insān kāmīl*.³¹ The set of terms appears in the section "On the Essence of the Character" in the ninth epistle of the First Book. Here, they first explain that there are two types of character: the innate (*markūza*) and the acquired (*muktasaba.*) Each individual man has his own peculiar character, but none is endowed with all the characters.

³⁰ Ikhwān, *Rasā'il*, 3:427.

³¹ Nasr, pp. 67-68; Mustafa al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣila bayna al-Taṣawwuf wa al-Tashayyūc* (Cairo, 1969), pp. 464-65.

If one single man were characterized by all the characters, there would be no trouble (*kulfa*) for him to manifest all the actions and all the crafts. However, [the universal, absolute man] is characterized by receiving all the characters and manifestations of all the actions and crafts, but "the particular man" is not. Know that all men are individuations of this absolute man. This absolute man is what we pointed out as being the vicegerent of God on earth since the day of the creation of Adam, Father of the human being, to the day of the Resurrection. And this is the universal, human soul existing in every individual, just as God said, "We did not create nor resurrect in no wise but as one single soul" [31/28.]³²

The similarity of the above passage to the passage of the "form of forms" is obvious. Here, "the absolute man" is called "the universal human soul," which is the same as "the universal, human, rational soul." Therefore Nyberg's and 'Abd al-Laṭīf's identification of the "absolute man" with the universal soul, i.e., the *anima mundi*, on the basis of the above passage is unfounded.³³

However, a very similar set of terms, "The universal, virtuous man" (*insān kullī fāḍil*) and "the particular man" appears in the *Risāla al-Jāmi'a*, but they are used in a different sense. As already pointed out by S. H. Nasr,³⁴ here the former term refers to the supralunar spheres, that is, the "spiritual, luminous, noble world" (*ʿālam rūḥānī sharīf nūrānī*,) and the latter refers to the sublunary world.³⁵

Like Kindī and other Neo-Platonists, they claim the strict dichotomy of the body and the soul. Their union is unfortunate and temporary. It is the goal of man to free the soul from the body and the material

³²Ikhwān, *Rasā'il*, 1:306.

³³H. S. Nyberg, *Kleinere Schriften* p. 96; 'Abd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad al-'Abd, *al-Insān fī Fikr Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* (Cairo, 1976), p. 86.

³⁴Nasr, p. 68.

³⁵Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *al-Risāla al-Jāmi'a*, ed. Mustafa Ghālib (Beirut, 1974), p. 276.

world.³⁶ However, as it is, man is the synthesis (*majmūʿ*) of the soul and the body: "Man is the compound whole (*jumla murakkaba*) of the visible, outer body and the hidden, inner spiritual soul."³⁷ They explain the relation between the two through various metaphors; the house and the inhabitant, the rind and the core, the fruit and the tree, the rider and the horse.³⁸ Although between the two, the soul is certainly the nobler part of man,³⁹ both the body and the soul occupy special high rank among the existents.

While man is the most perfect of the creatures and the most complete of the beings which are under the moon, and although his body is only a part of the entire universe, this part is the most similar thing to the whole, the soul of man is also most similar among the particular souls to the universal soul, which is the *anima mundi*.⁴⁰

Thus man is the most perfect among the creatures under the moon. And often they quote the Qur'anic verse, "We created man in the best stature." (95/4); e.g.:

The creator created man in the best condition and formed him as the perfect form (*ṣūra*) and made his form the mirror for Himself, so that the form of the greater world may be reflected in it.⁴¹

Man, who is the synthesis of the soul and the body, is also the intermediary between the synthesis of the higher and the lower worlds.

³⁶Concerning the liberation of the soul from the body in the Ikhwān, see Geo Widengren, "The Gnostic Technical Language in the Rasā'il Ihwān al-Sāfā'," in *Actas do IV. Congresso de Estudos Arabes e Islamicos* (Leiden, 1971), pp. 181-203. Although Widengren emphasizes the Gnostic influence, this motif seems to be more Platonic or Neo-Platonic.

³⁷Ikhwān, *Rasā'il*, 2:415.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 2:379; cf. 2: 459.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 2:379.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 2:476-77.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 2:462.

The human form (*ṣūra insāniya*,) human constitution (*khilqa bashariya*) with which rational souls (*nufūs nāṭiqā*) and the intellectual faculties (*quwā 'āqila*) are connected is the intermediary between these two worlds [i.e., the supralunar and the sublunar.] It is connected with the spiritual world through the rational soul and the intellectual faculty, and with the world of particulars (*'ālam juz'ī*,) the lower center (*markaz safī*) through natural matter (*hayūlā tabī'iya*) and bodily form (*ṣūra jismāniya*.) Therefore, we say that it is the synthesis (*majmū'*) of the two worlds.⁴²

Not only man, but also the human soul itself occupies the middle rank (*al-rutba al-wusṭā*) among the existents. The existents which are higher than the human soul are the Creator, the Intellect, and the angels who are pure forms devoid of matter (*al-ṣuwar al-mujarrada min al-hayūlā*.)⁴³ In another place they -- like Ghazzālī⁴⁴ -- place man in the middle rank between the angel and the animal,⁴⁵ although it is possible for man to reach the rank of angels by purifying his soul.⁴⁶

Self-Knowledge in the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'

The motif of self-knowledge which we have analyzed in the previous chapter also occurs very frequently in the Ikhwān. However, while in the previous chapter we have treated the concept of self-knowledge as the knowledge of God, the Ikhwān's main emphasis is on self-knowledge as the knowledge of the universe, and in this way it is closely related to the microcosm-macrocosm theory. The idea of self-knowledge as the knowledge of God appears only twice in the *Rasā'il*. Once it appears in the answer of the animal against man's boasting of skillful engineers and land surveyors. The animal retorts to man that these sciences are

⁴² *al-Risāla al-Jāmi'a*, p. 278.

⁴³ Ikhwān, *Rasā'il*, 2:415.

⁴⁴ *Supra*, p. 33.

⁴⁵ *al-Risāla al-Jāmi'a*, p. 156.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 157; p. 161; p. 224.

not necessary, what is more important is the knowledge of his own body, and quotes the *ḥadīth*, "Whoever knows himself knows his Lord."⁴⁷ In the second case, the Ikhwān affirm that the final aim of natural sciences is the divine sciences (*ʿulūm ilāhīya*.) The first level of these divine sciences is the knowledge of the substance (*jawhar*) of the soul, and the search for its origin and its primordial condition before its attachment to the body and the investigation into its future destiny after death. There is no road for man to reach the knowledge of his Lord except after he knows his soul (himself.) And they quote the *ḥadīth*, "Whoever knows himself knows his Lord,"⁴⁸

As we have seen in the preceding section, the soul must be purified in this world to free itself from the contamination of the body. The purification is possible only through knowledge. As in Gnosticism, knowledge itself is the salvation. And the knowledge which liberates man is knowledge of the soul. However, knowledge of the soul can only be attained by man's knowing his body.⁴⁹

The Significance of Man's Creation as the Microcosm

It must be noted that when the Ikhwān say that man is the microcosm, generally they mean the body of man. This means that the human body contains the phenomenal universe, including the heavenly bodies. It is because of the wisdom of God that He created man's body as the microcosm, so that man can obtain all the knowledge of the universe by knowing his body. This educational purpose of God is clearly stated in the following.

⁴⁷ Ikhwān, *Rasā'il*, 1:76.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 4:193.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 2:379-80.

God knows that the universe is large and big, and it is not within the power of man to go around the world, so that he may see it entirely, due to the shortness of the life and the length of age of the world. Thus He saw with His wisdom and He created for him a microcosm summarizing the great world. And He formed (*ṣawwara*) in the microcosm everything which exists in the great world.⁵⁰

The Ikhwān explain the above educational purpose of God in the form of a parable, which is strangely reminiscent of Campanella's *The City of the Sun* and the medieval *ars memoria*.⁵¹ A wise king had small sons, and wanted to educate them properly before they were to be received in his court, because only those of refined character and manners were fitting to his court. So the king built a strong castle for them and assigned to each one of them a room and wrote down around the room all the sciences which he wanted them to learn, and through which he wanted them to refine their character. And he ordered his sons, saying "Look at what I painted for you before you. Read what I have written in it for your sake, and contemplate what I explained for you, and think over them, so that you may know their meanings and thus become wise, good, virtuous, and pious." It seems that the paintings and writings on the wall were arranged in six levels. On the highest level astronomical science is painted; on the second level geographical and geological sciences are painted; on the third level, the medical, biological, and mineral sciences are painted and described; on the fourth level, knowledge of crafts, professions, and agriculture are described, and cities and markets are painted to explain business transactions and commerce; and in the last level, the sciences of politics are written. Then, the Ikhwān explain the metaphors: the wise king is God, his children are the human

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:462.

⁵¹ Concerning the *ars memoria*, see Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Paperback edition (London, 1984).

beings (*insānīya*,) the castle he built is the entire universe, the rooms are the human shapes (*ṣūra al-insān*.) The kinds of knowledge which are painted are the marvelous composition of his body. The knowledge which is formed in it (*mutakawwana*) is the faculties of the soul and its kinds of knowledge.⁵²

As was pointed out, in the Ikhwān's microcosm-macrocosm theory, the main emphasis is put more on the correspondences between the human body and the universe. The powers and actions of the human soul permeate the entire body (microcosm) just as the powers of the universal soul permeate the entire universe. The correspondences are very detailed and sometimes too fanciful and forced. Correspondences are manifold: thus, for instance, the same organ corresponds to various things of the universe⁵³ and, *vice versa*, the same planet corresponds to different organs in different places.⁵⁴ Here we can give only the most brief summary of these various types of correspondences. First, there exist correspondences between the body and the heavens.⁵⁵ Then also the sublunar world corresponds to the body. Here are included the four elements (*arkān*, or *ummahāt*,) three kingdoms (i.e., animals, plants, minerals,) each of which finds correspondence in the human body.⁵⁶ The meteorological phenomena and the geographical features also have their equivalents in the body. The following is a typical example.

⁵²Ikhwān, *Rasā'il*, 2:460-61.

⁵³For instance, the five outer senses are compared to tax-collectors (*ḥushshār*) and peddlers/slave-dealers (*jallābūn*) in 2:385; and to spies (*aṣhāb al-akhbar*) in 2:467.

⁵⁴For instance, the sun and the moon are compared to the rational faculty (*qūwa 'āqila*) and the speaking faculty (*qūwa nāṭiqā*) in 2:464; and to the heart and the lung in 2:477,479.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 2:463-65.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 2:466.

The structure of his body is like the earth. His bones are like the mountains; the marrow in it like the minerals [ores;] his belly (*jawf*) like the sea; his intestines like the rivers; his veins like brooks; his flesh like the soil (*turāb*) his hair like plants; the part where the hair grows (*manbāt*) like the fertile land; the part where no hair grows like the salty marshland; the front part from the face to the foot like the inhabited land; his back like the ruined land (*kharāb*), the front part of his face like the east; his back like the west; his right hand like the south; his left hand like the north; his breath like the wind; his speech (*kalām*) like the thunder (*raʿd*) his voices like the bolts of lightning (*sawāʿiq*) his laughter like the noon light, his weeping like the rain; his despair and sorrow like the darkness of the night.⁵⁷

It is interesting to see how the medical, or "pseudo-scientific" correspondences are carried away and shift to almost poetical comparisons.

A central characteristic of the microcosm-macrocosm theory of the Ikhwān is their very frequent use of the city-state metaphor ("the holistic microcosm theory" of Allard.)⁵⁸ Sometimes the universe and the human body are compared to the city-state. In the former case, the sun corresponds to the king.⁵⁹ In the latter case, there are two types of comparison. In the first type, mainly the architectural structure of the city is compared to the body.⁶⁰ This is a variation of the comparison of the body and the soul to the house and its inhabitants. In the second type, the various functionaries of the state are compared to faculties of the soul.⁶¹ In the first type, the intellect (*ʿaql*) is the king; in the second type, the soul. We will examine the details of this second type of microcosm theory later in comparison with those of Ghazālī and Ibn ʿArabi.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸For instance, *ibid.*, 2:380-395; 459-9; 468-70; 3:216; 219-20; 242.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 2:467.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 2:380-82.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 2:468-72.

It is most interesting to note that, at least in two places, the Ikhwān seem to indicate that it is not the individual man who contains everything in him, but it is the human being in the collective, generic sense which contains everything in the universe.⁶²

They also try to show the correspondences between various kinds of animals and man.

Then know, oh brother, that animals are many in species and every species of them has their characteristics (*khāṣṣīya*) which others do not have. Man shares all of them in their characteristics (*khawāṣṣ*).⁶³

Man is brave like the lion, cowardly like the rabbit, liberal like the chicken, stingy like the dog. In this way, they continue the list of animal qualities found in man. Then they conclude as follows:

In short, there is no animal, no mineral, no element, no plant, no constellation, no existent (*mawjūd*) whose characteristics are not found in man, and these things which we mentioned concerning man are not found in any other species of existents in this world except in man. And because of this the sages said that Man is alone after all multiplicity just as the Creator is alone before all multiplicity.⁶⁴

Here man is compared to God in that both are an all-comprehensive unity, although God is before multiplicity and man after it.

Although the microcosm-theory of the Ikhwān is mainly "structural" and "holistic," the epistemological, psychological microcosm theory is not entirely lacking in them. In the third part, when they declared that man is nobler than the animal in the respect of his composition (*tarkīb*), they continue as follows.

In the composition of man are united all the meanings (*ma'ānī*) of the existents, both simple and compound, which have been already mentioned before, because man is the compound of the coarse body and the single spiritual soul.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 1:306; 3:427.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 3:188.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 2:475.

Because of this, sages named man the microcosm and the universe the big man. When man really knows himself in terms of marvels of the composition of his body, fineness of its structure, and the manners of the actions of the powers of the soul in it, and the manifestations of the actions of the soul through it, namely firm works and perfect crafts, then he is ready to judge (*yaqīs*) all the meanings (*ma'ānī*) of the sensibles by analogy with it, and infer from it all the meanings of the intelligibles of the two worlds altogether.⁶⁵

Although in the above passage the epistemological-psychological aspect is not well developed, still the term *ma'ānī* (meanings) is remarkable.

The Imago Dei Motif in the Ikhwān

Although the Ikhwān often affirm that man is the vicegerent of God on earth and has the best composition, quoting the Qur'an, they do not use the *imago Dei ḥadīth* in this context. It seems that they did not know this motif as a *ḥadīth*. The *imago Dei* motif is used once as a quotation from one of the revealed books, in the section "On the Action of God whose Action is through His Essence and the Attributes which are fitting to Him" in the eighth epistle of the fourth part. It is somewhat strange that the *imago Dei* motif is not used in the context of the macrocosm-microcosm motif, but in the context of the essence-attributes doctrine. In this section, first it is said that the intellect is the nearest to its Creator and is the action of the Creator, while it is the actor in relation to what is below it. Then they continue as follows:

Since the actor gave his image (*ṣūra*) and his likeness (*mithāl*) to his action which is special to him, and he supports it [i.e., action] through the power, for the sake of which this strength had been created over the actions that were before him,⁶⁶ the Intellect became a place (*mawḍi'*) for the command (*amr*) of God and a locus (*makān*) for His power. In some revealed books appeared the words, "God created Adam in His image and likeness," and also [in the Qur'an] the words of God, "and for Him is the highest example (*al-mathal al-a'lā*) in the heavens and the earth." (16/60; 30/27.) Thus

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 3:188.

⁶⁶Read *lī ghāyatiḥā* instead of *lahā biḥā*.

the sages said that in the caused (*al-ma' lūl*) are found the traces (*āthār*) of the cause. Thus perfect actions and perfect handicrafts began to indicate the wisdom of their creator. They are related to him, because he is described (*mawṣūf*) by them.⁶⁷

In the above passage, it is somewhat ambiguous whether the "actor" refers to God or the Intellect. In the first case, Adam is the symbol of the Intellect, and in the second, the phenomenal world. Whichever may be, the *imago Dei* motif is quoted here to explain that the created things [the caused] are the indicators of their creator and his attributes.

Macrocosm-Microcosm Motif in Ghazzālī

We have already noted that Ghazzālī employed frequently the macrocosm-microcosm motif in connection with the interpretation of the *imago Dei ḥadīth*. In this section, I propose to describe this motif in more detail.

In the *Imlā'*, the correspondences of the macrocosm and the microcosm are stated as follows:

Whoever looks at the details of the shape (*ṣūrat*) of the great universe, divides it into several parts. Adam can be also divided in such a way. Each part is similar to the other. Thus the universe is divided into two parts. One part is outer, and sensible like the world of the *mulk* the second, inner and intelligible like the world of the *malakūt*. Man is also divided into the outer, sensible part like the bone, flesh, blood and other kinds of sensible substances, and into the inner part like the spirit, the intellect, the will, the power, and so forth. In another division, the universe is divisible into three worlds: the world of the *mulk*, which is outer for the sense; the world of the *malakūt*, which is inner for the intellect; and the world of the *jabarūt*, which is the middle . . . Thus, man can be divided into corresponding parts. The equivalent to the world of the *mulk* is the sensible parts . . . The equivalent to the world of the *malakūt* is the spirit, the intellect, the power, the will, and so forth. The equivalent to the world of the *jabarūt* is the perceptions

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 4:206.

(*idrākāt*) existing in the senses and the powers existing in its parts.⁶⁸

In the *Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr*, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Ghazzālī compares God's control over the universe to that of man over his body. (*Supra*, p. 35.) Then he continues as follows.

It becomes clear that the form of the heart, as the center of the human kingdom, resembles the Throne of God; the brain resembles His Footstool,⁶⁹ the senses resemble the angels who obey God by their nature without being able to resist Him; the nerves and the members resemble the heavens; the power of the hands resembles the servile nature localised in the bodies; the paper, the pen and ink resemble the elements (*ʿanāṣir*) which are the receptive matrices of union, mixture, and separation; the mirror of the imagination resembles the Well-Prepared Tablet.⁷⁰

The most interesting macrocosm-microcosm theory is found at the beginning of the *Kīmīyā-yi Saʿādat*. This part corresponds approximately to the *Kitāb Sharḥ ʿAjāʾib al-Qalb*, in the third part of the *Iḥyāʾ*. Ghazzālī begins the book with the quotation of the Prophetic *ḥadīth*, "whoever knows himself knows his Lord," and the Qur'anic verse, "We will show them our signs in the horizons and in their souls" (41/53.) Nothing is nearer to us in the universe than ourselves. Therefore, if we do not know ourselves, how can we know others? However, to know oneself does not mean to know one's physical body, but to know what the self is, whence one came, whither one will go, why one came inside the dwelling place, for what purpose one was created, what one's happiness and misery are.⁷¹ Obviously knowledge of this kind is concerned with the inner

⁶⁸Ghazzālī, *Imlāʾ* in the *Iḥyāʾ* 5:39-40. Concerning the term *mulk*, *malakūt*, and *jabarūt*, see L. Gardet. "ʿĀlam," in EI².

⁶⁹In the *Iḥyāʾ*, 3:5, it is said that Sahl al-Tustarī compared the heart to the Throne, the breast to the Footstool. See *infra*, p. 102, for the similar comparison in Ibn ʿArabī.

⁷⁰Ghazzālī, *al-Maḍnūn al-Ṣaghīr* p. 358.

⁷¹Ghazzālī, *Kīmīyā-yi Saʿādat*, ed. Aḥmad Ārām, (Tehran, A. H. 1319 Solar.) p. 9. Compare with the similar idea of the Ikhwān (*supra*, p. 86.)

self, that is, one's soul. Thus to know oneself is to know one's soul.

Then, Ghazzālī asserts that inside man there are four attributes: those of cattle, predatory animals, devils and angels.⁷² The first is the attribute of concupiscence; the second, that of anger; the third, that of wicked cunningness; the fourth, that of the inner reality of man, which Ghazzālī calls the heart. A little later in the section entitled "The Manner of Appearance of the Good and Bad Attributes in Man," they are listed again as the four types of human character.⁷³ Concupiscence, anger, and the angelic character correspond to the Platonic division of the soul: the concupiscent; the irascible; and the rational, although the devilish character does not have its counterpart in Plato, man shares the two former characteristics with the animal. Therefore man's reality does not lie in them.

Man is nobler and more perfect than cattle and predatory animals. Perfection is given to everything, and that is the goal of its rank, and everything is created for that. For example, the horse is nobler than the donkey, because the donkey is created to carry burdens, the horse to charge in battle and the holy war . . . the power of carrying burdens is also given to the horse, like the donkey, but the additional perfection is also given to the horse, which is not given to the donkey. If the horse falls short of its own perfection, it is used as a pack-horse; it falls down to the rank of the donkey.⁷⁴

Although man possesses all the qualities which the animals possess, what distinguishes man from other animals is the intellect (*ʿaql*.) And because of this, man is given dominance over the universe; and Ghazzālī quotes the Qur'anic verse 35/13.⁷⁵ However, the devilish character misuses this superior faculty of man for evil purposes, contriving plots

⁷²*Kīmīyā*, p. 9.

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 21.

and tricks.⁷⁶ But it must be used to know God and His works and control desire and anger.⁷⁷ In this lies the real nature of man, that is the angelic attributes. Then he compares these four characters to the pig, the dog, the devil, and the angel, and says that they are all found inside the human skin. The dog and the pig are not despicable and blamable because of their outer shapes, but because of the attributes of anger and concupiscence inside them. Those people in whom concupiscence and anger are predominant worship the pig and the dog in reality, and offer their service to them.⁷⁸ Although they resemble a human being in respect of the outer shape, they appear in the real shape of the pig and the dog in the dream and on the day of the Resurrection.⁷⁹

Ghazzālī asserts that man is created from the outer body and the inner meaning (*ma'nī-yī bāṭin.*) The latter is called *nafs* (soul,) *jān* (spirit,) *dil* (heart.)⁸⁰ Also it is said that some people call the human reality (*ḥaqīqat-i ādamī*) *rūḥ* (spirit) and some *nafs*.⁸¹ We have already seen that in the *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, Ghazzālī uses *rūḥ*, *nafs*, *ʿaql* synonymously.⁸² This is most clearly stated in the *ʿAjā'ib al-Qalb*. Here he analyzes the terms *nafs*, *rūḥ*, *qalb*, and *ʿaql*. Each has two meanings: one refers to the physical object, the other to the inner subtle reality of man. In the first meaning, the four words are all different, but in the latter meaning, they all refer to the same

⁷⁶*Iḥyā'*, 3:11.

⁷⁷*Kīmīyā*, p. 21.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 17, and the *Iḥyā'*, 3:11.

⁷⁹*Kīmīyā*, p. 18.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸²*Supra*, p. 39-40.

reality.⁸³ And among the four, he chooses to use the term "heart" for this reality.⁸⁴ While the terms, "spirit," "soul," "intellect" are used also in philosophy, the term "heart" belongs to the typical Sufi terminology.⁸⁵

Ghazzālī compares the anatomical heart to the vehicle (*markab*) and the instrument of the real heart. Then he proceeds to the city-state metaphor. The heart is the king (*pādīshāh*) of the entire body, and everything other than the heart are his followers (*tabaʿ*), his soldiers (*lashkar*) and servants.⁸⁶ There are two types of soldiers: the outer and the inner. To the former belong all the organs like hands, feet, and the five outer senses; to the latter belong anger, desire and five inner senses. All these soldiers obey the order of the king faithfully. Among them, the members of the body like hands and feet are artisans (*pīshevarān*) of the city; Desire, the tax-collector; Anger, the police, Reason (*ʿaql*) the minister.⁸⁷ All these are necessary for the king to govern the kingdom properly. However, Anger and Desire must be always subjected to Reason, so if Reason becomes the prisoner of Desire and Anger, the kingdom will be ruined and the king will be destroyed.⁸⁸

⁸³ *Iḥyāʾ*, 3:4-5.

⁸⁴ *Kīmīyā*, p. 11.

⁸⁵ Concerning the concept of the "heart" in Sufism, see Richard Gramlich, *Die Schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens, Zweiter Teil: Glaube und Lehre* (Wiesbaden, 1976), pp. 73-79; and L. Gardet, "Kalb I. Mysticism," *EI*².

⁸⁶ *Kīmīyā*, p. 11.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Just like the four kinds of attributes and characters in man, the above three functionaries of the state have their origin in the Platonic tripartite division of the soul. In the Ikhwān, these three faculties of the soul are compared to the leaders of the army. And it is said that the irascible faculty must be controlled by the concupiscent faculty; the concupiscent faculty by the rational faculty (*qūwa nāṭiqā*) the rational faculty by the suprahuman intellect (*ʿaql*).⁸⁹ If we compare the above city-body analogy of Ghazzālī with that of the Ikhwān, the difference easily noticeable is that the latter emphasize more physical, medical correspondences. The King in the Ikhwān is the soul (*nafs*.) They also identify the soul with the spirit (*rūḥ*).⁹⁰ Although in Ghazzālī the heart is the king, it is equivalent to the soul as we have seen before. The minister who specializes in the management of the kingdom and the government of the subject is the "faculty of craft" (*qūwa al-sināʿa*), one of the five inner senses.⁹¹ This faculty is in charge of the writing of what is thought in the brain, and is localized in the hand and the finger.⁹² The place of "reason" or rational faculty is confused in the Ikhwān. As we have seen above, it is mentioned once as one of the Platonic tripartite divisions of the soul. In another place, the rational faculty (*al-qūwa al-ʿāqila*) and the speaking faculty (*al-qūwa al-nāṭiqā*) are mentioned together with the five outer senses as the seven spiritual faculties of the soul; the former corresponds to the sun and is localized in the middle of the brain, the lat-

⁸⁹Ikhwān, *Rasāʾil*, 3:389.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 2:477.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 2:471.

⁹²*Ibid.*

ter to the moon.⁹³ Although the *qūwa al-nāṭiqa* usually means in philosophy the rational faculty,⁹⁴ the Ikhwān strangely take the adjective *nāṭiqa* in its literal sense "speaking," and localize it between the throat and the tongue.⁹⁵ Both the speaking faculty and the faculty of craft are included in the five inner senses. The former is compared to the gatekeeper (*ḥājib*) and the interpreter (*turjumān*.) The other three are the imaginative (*mutakhayyila*), the thinking (*mufakkira*), and the preserving (*ḥāfiẓa*) faculties; they are located in the front, middle and back of the brain respectively, and correspond to the boon-companions (*nudamā'*) of the king.⁹⁶ The thinking faculty must be identical with the rational faculty, since as is mentioned above, the latter is also localized in the middle of the brain.

Ghazzālī's concept of five inner senses is more similar to that of the philosopher.⁹⁷ As we have already mentioned, the outer senses correspond to the spies. They gather information and bring it to the imaginative faculty, which corresponds to the postmaster (*ṣāhib-e barīd*.) The preserving faculty corresponds to the one who is in charge of the

⁹³*Ibid.*, 2:464.

⁹⁴This philosophical usage is not unknown to them. They say: "When [the soul] does the [activity of] growing (*namū*), it is called "the growing soul" (*al-nāmiya*.) When it does [the activity of] sensing (*ḥiss*) and moving (*ḥaraka*), it is called "the animal soul" (*ḥayawāniya*.) When it does the [activity of] of thinking (*fikr*) and distinction (*tamyīz*), it is called the rational soul (*nāṭiqa*.) (*Ibid.*, 2:410. cf. 2:389).

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 2:414, 464, 471. cf. Harry A. Wolfson, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, Hebrew Philosophical Texts," in *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, ed. Isadore Twersky and George H. Williams, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973), 1: 260-63.

⁹⁶*Rasā'il*, 2:471.

⁹⁷They are the imaginative (*khayāl*), the thinking (*tafakkur*), the preserving (*ḥafẓ*), the remembering (*tadhakkur*), and the estimative (*tawahhum*) faculties. (*Kīmiyā*, p. 14.) See also Wolfson, "The Inner Senses," pp. 267-285.

letter bag (*khalīta-dār*,)⁹⁸ who takes the letter of information from the postmaster, and then at the proper time reports to the minister, Reason. Although it is not mentioned here, the other three faculties are thinking (*tafakkur*,) memory (*tadhakkur*) and estimation (*tawahhum*).⁹⁹

Although Ghazzālī's main concern is with the heart and the spiritual faculties in man, at least in one section entitled "Marvels of the Wonders of God in the Human Body," he occupies himself with medical science and correspondences between the body and the universe. The correspondences mentioned here are very similar to those of the Ikhwān.

The human body in its summary is a copy (*mithāl*) of all the universe, and whatever is created in the universe is found inside man. The bone is like the mountain; the sweat like the rain; the hair like the tree; the brain like the sky; the senses like the stars. To enumerate these in full would take too long; but all the genera of the creation have their copy in him.¹⁰⁰

Then he compares the various physiological activities inside man to artisans; e.g. the digestive power of the stomach is compared to the cook. Then he declares that the medical knowledge of our body must also lead to the knowledge of God, that is, the knowledge of the Creator through His creation, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Finally, he states as follows:

Nothing is nearer to you than yourself. Someone who does not know himself and claims to know other things is as ruined as someone who cannot feed himself and claims that all the dervishes of the city eat his bread; that is both improper and impossible.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸According to the *Iḥyā'*, 3:10, it is the treasurer (*khāzin*,) and the tongue is the interpreter (*turjumān*.)

⁹⁹*Kīmiyā*, p. 16. *Iḥyā'*, 3:10.

¹⁰⁰*Kīmiyā*, p. 29.

¹⁰¹*Kīmiyā*, p. 30. The Ikhwān write to the same purpose: "When we make up our mind to know the realities of the existents (*ḥaqā'iq al-mawjūdāt*,) we must first begin with the knowledge of ourselves. Since they [ourselves] are the closest thing to us. Then after this knowl-

Macrocosm-Microcosm Theory of Ibn 'Arabi

Ibn 'Arabi uses the macrocosm-microcosm motif very often. However, as we have pointed out in the first chapter, his use of this motif is basically "epistemological."¹⁰² Since man can know everything in the universe, he must have everything in the universe inside him. However, the structural microcosm-macrocosm theory is not absent in Ibn 'Arabi. In this section, we would like to analyze the structural macrocosm-microcosm theory in Ibn 'Arabi.

In this sense the most interesting work is *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhiya fī Iṣlāḥ al-Mamlaka al-Insāniya*. The entire book is modelled on Pseudo-Aristotle's *The Secret of Secrets*, which deals with the art of governing the state. In this book, Ibn 'Arabi teaches us how to govern the body, which is considered the kingdom. The book is one of the most detailed anthropological treatises of Ibn 'Arabi, and the macrocosm-microcosm motif is predominant all through the book.

In the beginning of the book, he expounds the general correspondences between the macrocosm and the microcosm:¹⁰³ what grows in the universe corresponds to the hair and the nail; the four kinds of water (briny, sweet, rotten, bitter) to the water of the eyes, mouth, nose, and ear respectively. Just as the universe is created from the four elements

edge, we can proceed to the knowledge of other things, because it is ugly (*qabīḥ*) for us to claim [the knowledge of] the realities of things without knowing ourselves." (*Rasā'il*, 3:188-89.)

¹⁰²The term "epistemological microcosmic theories" is used by Conger, p. 22. This corresponds to "psychological" microcosmism of Allers, pp. 330-31. The idea ultimately goes back to Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3:8 (431b 21), where he says that the soul is in a way everything.

¹⁰³These are four of the seven faculties of the plant soul according to the Iḥwān. The remaining three are the nourishing, the forming, and the growing faculties. (*Rasā'il*, 3:193.) These are mentioned several times in their microcosm theory. (*Ibid.*, 2:382, 390, 464.) Concerning the Hellenistic origin of this doctrine, see Diwald, pp. 87-88.

(earth, water, air, fire,) so is the human body created from these four elements. The four winds (i.e., winds from four directions) correspond to the four physiological faculties (i.e., the sucking, the holding, the digestive, the rejecting.)¹⁰⁴ The animals and devils correspond to bad qualities, angels to good qualities of man. Just as in the world there are invisible and visible parts, in man there are the outside and the inside: the former is the world of the sense, i.e., the *mulk* the latter the world of the heart, i.e. the *malakūt*.¹⁰⁵

As Ibn ʿArabī himself admits, these correspondences are in reality metaphors and similes (*istiʿārāt wa al-majāz*.)¹⁰⁶ The following quotation from *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya* clearly shows the method of analogy,

Man is in reality a comprehensive copy (*nuskha jāmiʿa*) in the meaning that in him there is something of the sky in a certain aspect, and something of the earth in a certain aspect, and something of everything in a certain aspect, but not in all aspects . . . It cannot be said that man is the sky, or the earth, or the Throne, but it can be said that he bears a resemblance to the sky in such and such an aspect, and to the earth in such and such an aspect, and to the Throne in such and such an aspect, and to the element of fire in such and such an aspect, . . . and to everything.¹⁰⁷

In *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīya*, he explains how to find correspondences in the following way.

When your eyes fall upon a certain existent, search for the attribute which is dominant over that existent . . . You find out that attribute which makes it [i.e., the existent] known and indicates it, be it its essential attribute (*al-ṣifa al-nafsīya*) or its dominant attribute. Then you see the very same attribute, and you will most certainly find this attribute in some man, then you apply the name of that which has

¹⁰⁴Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīya fī Iṣlāḥ al-Mamlaka al-Insānīya*, ed. H. S. Nyberg, in *Kleinere Schriften*, pp. 108-109.

¹⁰⁵Compare with the theory of Ghazzālī (*supra*, p. 92.)

¹⁰⁶*Tadbīrāt*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁷Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahyā) 3:328.

this attribute to the man, when you observe this attribute. For example, in point of stupidity which is the dominant attribute of the donkey as compared to other animals, we apply to someone the name of donkey, when we see a stupid man.¹⁰⁸

In this way, Ibn 'Arabī enumerates the correspondences between various kinds of animals and man who shares their dominant attributes.¹⁰⁹

Slightly different from the above exposition is the following macro-cosm-microcosm theory.¹¹⁰ Here it is said that the world consists of the *mulk* and the *malakūt*. The former corresponds to bodily nature (*jismā-nīya*) and the latter to spiritual nature. Mountains correspond to the bones; the sea with its tides to the blood running in the body; sweet water to the saliva in the mouth; briny water to tears in the eyes; bitter water to the cerumen in the ear. That part of the body where nothing grows (i.e., hairless parts) corresponds to sterile land. Lakes from which rivers branch out correspond to aortae (*watīn*) which transmit (*yabuthth*) the blood and from which veins (*'urūq*) extend to the rest of the body. The sun and the moon correspond to the spirit and the intellect, the changes of the moon to those of the intellectual ability according to age. The five revolving planets are the five senses. The Throne corresponds to the heart, the Footstool to the breast (*ṣadr*).¹¹¹ Paradise and Hell correspond to the heart and the soul respectively, the Well-Preserved Tablet and the Pen to the breast and the tongue. The five senses are the messengers of the heart. However, the above correspondences are not fixed, rather there are many variations even in the same book. For instance, it is often said that the sun corresponds to

¹⁰⁸*Tadbīrāt*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, p. 110; p. 213.

¹¹⁰Ibn 'Arabī, *Shajarat al-Kawn* (Cairo, 1967), pp. 12-14.

¹¹¹It is the idea of Sahl Tustarī *apud* Ghazzālī. See *supra* n. 69.

the spirit, the moon to the soul;¹¹² or also the Throne corresponds to the imām, which is the spirit; the Footstool to the soul.¹¹³

After the model of the *Secret of Secrets*, the main part of *Al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīya* is occupied by the analogy of the city-state and man. The king, the sovereign of the city, is the spirit, he is the "vicegerent" of God on earth [i.e., the body,] and the *imām mubīn*¹¹⁴ which is localized in the heart.¹¹⁵ The model of the state in Ibn ʿArabī is more dynamic and moralistic than that of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā and Ghazzālī. Here the intellect (ʿaql) which is localized in the brain,¹¹⁶ is considered the minister (*wazīr*) as in Ghazzālī; however, the soul is the wife of the king. Desire (*hawā*) is the strong, but evil commander (*amīr*,) who has his own minister named Concupiscence (*shahwa*.) One day he sees the wife of the king, and falls in love with her. He employs various wiles to attract her, and finally she is enticed by him. Although the king does not realize what is happening, the wise minister tries to prevent the plan of the commander. One day, the king calls her, and the call is not answered; he finally asks the minister what has happened. The minister explains the evil plot of

¹¹² *Tadbīrāt*, p. 110.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹¹⁴ According to Ibn ʿArabī, it is the expression used by Abu al-Ḥakīm b. Barrajān. (*Tadbīrāt*, p. 125.) Usually the term *imām mubīn* refers to the Heavenly Qur'an (Qur'an 36/12.) See Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam* (Delhi, 1973), p. 204.

¹¹⁵ *Tadbīrāt*, p. 132. Ibn ʿArabī says that some people localized the spirit in the brain, and the location cannot be proven through logical demonstration (*burhān*,) but through revelation (*sharʿ*,) and he quotes a *ḥadīth qudsī*, "Neither My earth nor My heaven contains Me, but the heart of My slave contains Me," and a *ḥadīth*, "He does not look at your shapes (*ṣuwar*,) nor your works, but He does look at your hearts" as proof.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

the commander, and war breaks out between the army of the king led by the minister and the army of the evil commander.¹¹⁷

In Sufism, the soul is often considered feminine, because of its grammatical feminine gender.¹¹⁸ Ibn 'Arabī quotes the curious idea of Ghazzālī that the spirit and the soul marry and the body is born from them.¹¹⁹ Also in Sufism there are three levels of the soul: the soul commanding evil (*nafs ammāra bi al-sū'i*) the upbraiding soul (*nafs lawwāma*), and the tranquil soul (*nafs muṭma'inna*).¹²⁰ Ibn 'Arabī calls the soul "the place of purification and change" (*maḥall al-ta'-thīr wa al-taghyīr*).¹²¹ It has the potentiality to be purified and also to go wrong, and he quotes the Qur'anic verse, "By the soul, and the proportion and order given to it; He has given it the wickedness and god-fearingness." (91/7-8.) If the soul answers the call of the commander, Desire, she is called "the soul commanding evil;" and if she answers the call of the king, Spirit, she is called "the tranquil soul." Thus he incorporates the Sufi concept of the soul skillfully in this body-state analogy. Also the motif of the war between the good force led by the intellect and the evil force led by the desire is found in Ghazzālī. As we have seen before, Ghazzālī mainly compares Desire to the tax-collector, and Anger to the police chief. Although they must

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 134-38.

¹¹⁸Concerning the female character of the soul in Sufism, see Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun* (London, 1978), p. 269.

¹¹⁹*Tadbīrāt*, p. 135. cf. Manfred Profitlich, *Die Terminologie Ibn 'Arabī im "Kitāb wasā'il as-sā'il" des Ibn Saudakīn, Text, Übersetzung und Analyse* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1973), p. 76.

¹²⁰Concerning the three levels of the soul in Sufism, see Gramlich, pp. 71-73. Also see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), p. 112.

¹²¹*Tadbīrāt*, p. 135.

be controlled by the minister, Intellect, they are useful and necessary officials of the city-body. However, in the '*Ajā'ib al-Qalb* of the *Ihyā'*, in addition to the above comparison, he uses the following metaphor in order to explain the relation between the intellect and the desire.

Know that the body is like the city, and the human intellect . . . is like the king who governs it; the outer and the inner perceptive faculties are like his soldiers and helpers. The members of the body (*a'qā'*) are like his subjects. The "soul commanding evil," which is desire and anger, is like the enemy who fights with him in his kingdom and tries to destroy his subjects.¹²²

Then he compares the fight against this enemy to the *jihād*, and quotes the *ḥadīth*, "We returned from the lesser *jihād* to the greater *jihād*." In Sufism, it is common to call the fight against one's evil soul the "greater *jihād*." Although Ibn 'Arabī does not use the concept of the *jihād* there is no doubt that this common Sufi idea influenced him in his detailed description of the war between the intellect and the desire.¹²³

Ibn 'Arabī, like Ghazzālī, is not much interested in the anatomical correspondences between the body and the city. Therefore, his analogy is concerned with the moral qualities of man. The leaders (*quwwād*) of the army of the king are four in number, who defend the four fronts: Fear, Hope, Knowledge (*'ilm*), and Contemplation (*tafakkur*).¹²⁴ However, the stereotyped correspondences are also found in Ibn 'Arabī.¹²⁵ The physical organs of the body (such as eyes, ears, tongue hands, belly)

¹²²*Ihyā'*, 3:8.

¹²³Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 112. See also J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971), p. 139; p. 155.

¹²⁴*Tadbīrāt*, p. 194.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 185.

are the workers (*‘ummāl*) and the trustees (*umanā’*) of the treasure (*māl*.) They are levied by the tax collectors, who are the five outer senses. They carry their taxes to their chief, the common sense. Then the taxes are transmitted successively to the memory (*dhikr*,) the thought (*fikr*,) and the intellect. During the transmission, the taxes change their names from the sensible, to the memorable, then to the thinkable, and finally to the intelligible. Then the intellect brings them to the king, and, finally the king brings them to God (*al-Ḥaqq*.) What is brought to God is no longer called the intelligibles, but the actions (*a‘māl*.) If God accepts them, they are called "the secrets" (*asrār*.)¹²⁶ Here, although in the beginning he uses philosophical, epistemological terminology, in the end religious terminology gradually intermingles, and finally overpowers it.

Like the Ikhwān, Ibn ‘Arabī is ambiguous concerning the five inner senses. In the above account, three of the five senses are mentioned. In the following passage, the inner senses are localized in the brain.

Then He built a lofty, overlooking, marvelous promenade (*muta-nazzah*) in the highest place of the city, and named it the brain, and opened in it the floors and the apertures for him [i.e., the king,] from which he overlooks his kingdom; they are the ears, the eyes, the nose, and the mouth. Then He built for him in the front part of this promenade a treasury (*khizāna*,) which He named the treasury of the imagination, and He made it the depository (*mustaqarr*) of his taxes . . . Then He built for him in the middle of the promenade the treasury of the thought (*fikr*,) to which the imaginative (*mutakhayyalāt*) ascend, and He built in the back of this promenade the treasury of the preservation (*ḥafẓ*), and He made this brain the dwelling place of the minister, who is the intellect.¹²⁷

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 187-89.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 133.

At the end of *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīya*, the detailed correspondences between the four worlds and man are found.¹²⁸ According to him, the universe consists of the Higher World, the world of change, the world of habitation of places,¹²⁹ and the world of relations, and every world contains a certain number of realities (*ḥaqā'iq*), forty-nine altogether. All these realities have their equivalents in man. Therefore there are altogether ninety-eight realities. However, there is in man the divine secret (*al-sirr al-ilāhī*), which is not found in the universe. Therefore in the entire universe there are ninety-nine realities, which correspond to the ninety-nine names of God. Although he does not explicitly mention it, he said that whoever enumerates them enter Paradise, which is the *ḥadīth* concerning the enumeration of the Divine Names. Also he adds that there is the hundredth reality which oversees everything, that is the Greatest Name of God.¹³⁰

The Higher World contains twenty Realities: the Universal Reality of Muḥammad and its sphere (*falak*), which correspond to the subtle substance (*laṭīfa*) and the holy spirit (*rūḥ qudsī*) in man; the Throne, which corresponds to the body; the Footstool, which corresponds to the soul; the Well-Visited House (The Heavenly Ka'ba,) which corresponds to the heart; the world of angels, which corresponds to spirits (*arwāḥ*) and ranks (*marātib*), then come the seven heavenly bodies and their

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 210-213. This part is incorporated to *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahyā), 2:231-233. Strangely Ibn 'Arabī here states that this part is the brief summary of the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*.

¹²⁹In the *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahyā), 2:231, it is called "the world of habitation" (*ta'mīr*.)

¹³⁰It is believed that besides the ninety-nine Names, God has the secret hundredth Name, the Greatest Name. Whoever knows this possesses a magical power. cf. G. C. Anawati, "Le nom supreme de Dieu (*Ism Allāh al-A'zam*), in *Atti del terzo Congresso di studi arabi e islamici* (Naples, 1967), pp. 7-58.

spheres, which correspond to faculties of memory, intellection, anger, thinking, estimation, imagination, sense, and their respective locations in the body. The world of change contains fifteen realities: the spheres of ether, air, water, earth, and their respective spirits, (fire is curiously lacking, perhaps in order to limit the number to eight,) which correspond to the four humors and the powers of rejection, digestion, sucking, holding; and the seven levels of soil, which correspond to the seven levels of the body, i.e., the skin, the fat, the flesh, the blood veins, the nerves, the muscles, and the bones.¹³¹ The world of the habitation of places consist of four realities: the spirituals (*rūḥāniyūn*, lower angels?)¹³² which correspond to (spiritual) powers; and the three kingdoms, i.e., animals, plants, and minerals, which correspond to the sensible parts, growing parts, and non-growing parts respectively. The world of relations consists of ten realities, which are nine categories of accidents in addition to "movement," all of which are found in man. The divine secret, which is only found in man is the prophetic faculty among prophets and saints. This will be treated in the next chapter.

¹³¹The Ikhwān compare the nine spheres of the universe to the nine layers of the body: the bone, the marrow, the flesh, the veins, the blood, the nerve, the skin, the hair, the nail. (*Rasā'il*, 2:463.)

¹³²The term "spirituals" (*rūḥāniyūn*) means the angels in the Ikhwān; e.g. *Rasā'il*. 4:198.

CHAPTER III

THE PERFECT MAN AS A SUFI SAINT

In the first chapter, we discussed the Perfect Man as man in general, which is symbolized by Adam created in the image of God. However, sometimes Ibn 'Arabi contrasts the Perfect Man with the Animal Man. With this contrast he indicates that not all men are the Perfect Man, but only certain special chosen men. In this chapter, first we shall discuss what kind of men are considered specimens of the Perfect Man as compared to the Animal Man, and then we shall analyze the theory of sainthood in Ibn 'Arabi, and finally trace the historical origin of his doctrine.

Ibn 'Arabi

The Perfect Man and The Animal Man

Asín Palacios in his "El místico murciano Abenarabi"¹ collected the most characteristic passages where the Perfect Man is contrasted with the Animal Man in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*. Here all three passages will be analyzed. The first passage appears in the long one hundred ninety-ninth chapter entitled "On the Knowledge of the Breath of the Merciful and Its Secrets."

When God wanted the perfection of the human constitution (*al-nash'a al-insānīya*), He combined (*jama'a*) for it with His two hands all the realities of the universe, and gave them to it, and He manifested Himself to it in all His Names. Thus, man attained both the divine image (*al-ṣūra al-ilāhiya*) and the creaturely image (*al-ṣūra al-kawnīya*). He made all the

¹Asín Palacios, "El místico Murciano Abenarabi, IV, su telogia y sistema del cosmos," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 92 (1928):739-46.

species (*aṣnāf*) of the universe vis-à-vis man similar to the member of the body vis-à-vis the spirit which governs them. If this man leaves the universe, the universe dies . . . Now, since man possesses this Divine Name "The Combiner" (*al-Jāmiʿ*), he thereby corresponds these two presences (*al-ḥaḍratayn*, i.e., divine and creaturely) by his very essence. Therefore, he became the true vicegerent and manager of the universe and its details. If a man does not reach the rank of perfection, then, he is an animal whose outer shape resembles the shape of man. Here we are concerned with the Perfect Man. At first, God did not create of this species except the perfect one -- he is Adam. Thus God demonstrated the rank of perfection for this species. Whoever attains this rank is Man who we are referring to, and he who goes down from this stage possesses humanity in proportion to where he is.²

In the above passage, it is stated that it is only those that have attained the rank of perfection who can be called man in the true sense of the word, that is, the Perfect Man. Whoever does not reach the rank of perfection is an animal who only resembles man in outer shape. Through the first man, Adam, God showed the model of perfection, and the synthetic nature of man can only be applied to the Perfect Man.

The second and third passages of Asín Palacios are both taken from the three hundred sixty-fifth chapter entitled "On the Knowledge of the Station (*manzil*) of the Collaboration (*ishtirāk*) with God in Determination (*taqdīr*)."

When God had created the universe with the exception of man, i.e., without his synthetic nature (*majmūʿ*), He modeled his form (*ṣūra*) upon the form of the entire universe. Hence, there is no part of the universe which is not in the image of man. I mean by the universe everything except God. Then He separated man from the universe after He regulated (*dabbara*) it. Thus, man is identical with the regulating command [of God.] Then God modeled him spiritually (*khadwan maʿnawīyan*) on the Presence (*ḥaḍra*) of the Divine Names. They [i.e., the Divine Names] appeared in man as images appear in the mirror to the viewer. Then, he separated him from the Presence of the Divine Names after their powers (*quwā*) have been produced in it. He manifested Himself through them in his spirit and in his interior. Therefore, the outer aspect of man is the creature (*khalq*) and his inner aspect is God (*ḥaqq*.) This is, then, the Perfect Man, the sought-for object (*maṭlūb*) [of the creation.] Whatever is besides him [i.e.,

²*Futūḥāt*, 2:464.

the Perfect Man] is the Animal Man. The rank of the Animal Man in relation to the Perfect Man is the rank of the *nīsnās* [half-human monster] in relation to the Animal Man.³

Then Ibn 'Arabī proceeds in detail to describe the formation of the universe in terms of the four elements. After explaining as far as the emergence of the plant and the animal, he concludes as follows:

When the bodily formation (*al-nash'a al-jismāniya*) of the plant and the animal was completed, there appeared in it all the faculties (*quwā*) of the animal. He gave it [i.e., the animal] [the faculty of] cognition from the faculty of the practical soul (*al-nafs al-'amaliya*) . . . For the animal, everything it knows about the crafts is not through [deliberate] regulation (*tadbīr*) nor through vision (*ru'yā*), rather its knowledge is intuitive, and it does not know from where this perfection (*itqān*) and firmness (*iḥkām*) come to it; thus are spiders, bees, and hornets. Man, on the other hand, knows that he cannot discover anything except through thought, vision, and [deliberate] regulation. Therefore man knows from where this comes. The rest of animals know the thing, but do not know its source. It is this which distinguishes man from other animals and nothing else. This is a condition (*ḥāla*) which is common to all men except the Perfect Man, for the Perfect Man adds to the Animal Man in the life of this world through the manipulation (*taṣrīf*) of Divine Names, whose powers he had taken into himself, when God had created a correspondence between him and them, after having created his correspondence with the universe. Thus God made the Perfect Man a vicegerent on behalf of the Great Universal Man (*al-insān al-kull al-kabīr*), who is the shadow of God on His creation from His creation. It is because of this that he [the Perfect Man] is a vicegerent. And for this reason, they [i.e., men] are vicegerents on behalf of one single vicegerent. They are, therefore, shadows of divine lights, which correspond to the primordial man (*al-insān al-ʿaṣlī*.) These are the lights of Divine manifestations, which come in succession upon him from all sides. Therefore, there appear for him numerous shadows in accordance with the number of Divine manifestations, for every divine manifestation has light which yields a shadow of the form of man in the material existence (*wujūd ʿunṣurī*.) That shadow, then, becomes a vicegerent, and from it come particular, individual vicegerents. As for the Animal Man, this is not at all his origin, rather his nature is just like the natures of other animals, except that he is distinguished from each other by the differentia which constitutes his nature, just as animals are distinguished from each other through the differentiae which constitute each one of them [i.e., animal species,] because the horse is not the donkey insofar as his constitutive differentia is concerned, nor is the mule, nor the bird, nor the beast

³*Futūḥāt*, 3:296.

of prey, nor the worm. The Animal Man is, therefore, from among the totality of creeping animals (*jumlat al-ḥasharāt.*) When he becomes perfect, he is a vicegerent.⁴

This contrast between the Perfect Man and the Animal Man is not limited to *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*, but is also found in Ibn 'Arabī's other writings. For instance, in the *Uqlat al-Mustawfīz*, it is said:

Since the Perfect Man is in the perfect image, the vicegerency and deputyship (*niyāba*) of God on earth is fitting to him. Let us explain in this station the formation (*nash'a*) of this vicegerent and his station and his real image. We do not mean by man the Animal Man, rather man who is the vicegerent. On account of his humanity and vicegerency, man deserves the image in perfection. Every man is not a vicegerent. In our opinion, the Animal Man is not a vicegerent.⁵

The same contrast appears also in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.

God subjected (*sakhkhara*) to him [Adam, i.e., the Perfect Man] the higher world and the lower world because of the perfection of his image. Just as there is nothing in the universe which does not praise God (c.f. Qur'an 17/44,) so is there nothing in the universe which is not subjected to him because of that [perfection] which the reality of his image gives him. God said, "He has subjected to you, as a charge from Him, all that is in the heavens and the earth." [45/13.] Therefore everything in the universe is kept in subjugation (*taskhīr*) to man. Whoever knows this knows this, and he is the Perfect Man. Whoever does not know this does not know this, and he is the Animal Man.⁶

From the above passages, we can conclude the following points:

1. Among men only those who have attained the rank of perfection can be called the Perfect Man.
2. The rest belong to the Animal Man, who is different from other animals only through his differentia which constitutes his nature, just as the horse is different from other animals through its differentia.

⁴*Futūḥāt*, 3:297.

⁵*Uqlat al-Mustawfīz*, pp. 45-46.

⁶*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 199.

3. The difference between the Animal Man and the Perfect Man lies in the latter's ability to manipulate (*taṣrīf*) the Divine Names. In the first chapter it is said that man is created according to the Divine Names and also according to the universe. Thus man has this double nature. His inside aspect is God, his outside aspect the creature. However, if one has only the outside aspect, that is, if he is not the synthesis of the Divine Names, he is not man in the real sense of the word, because he lacks this double nature. He is the Animal Man, who is not superior to other animals.

However, the difference between the Perfect Man and the Animal Man is not absolute, because man is in reality created for perfection. Therefore every man has the possibility to attain the rank of perfection.

As long as man lives, he has a hope of attaining the attribute of "perfection" for which he was created. Whoever tried to destroy him tried to prevent him from arriving at that [perfection] for which he was created.⁷

Although man is not in actuality the Perfect Man, he has always the possibility to attain the rank of perfection for which he was created. In the next section, we propose to investigate how man can attain this perfection.

The Heart of the Gnostic

In the following passage of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the Perfect Man is explicitly equated with the Sufi gnostic (*ʿārif*).⁷

Since the manifestation of God takes various shapes, the heart must also widen or narrow in accordance with the shapes of His manifestation. The heart cannot exceed the shapes of his manifestation, for the heart of a gnostic (*ʿārif*), that is, the Perfect Man, corresponds to the station (*manzila*) of the setting (*maḥall*) of the jewel (*faṣṣ*) on the ring; the setting does not exceed the size of the jewel, rather it follows the size and the shape of the jewel. If the jewel is round, the setting is round; if it is square, or hexagonal, or octagonal,

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 168.

the setting is also square, or hexagonal, or octagonal.⁸

Here, the heart of the gnostic is compared to the setting of the jewel, and the jewel to the manifestation of God in various shapes. Then how should we understand this divine manifestation?

In *al-Futūḥāt al Makkīya*, the Perfect Man is said to be the heart in relation to the body of the universe.

Through the Perfect Man appeared the perfection of the image (*kamāl al-ṣūra*.) He is the heart to the body of the universe. The universe is the expression for everything other than God. It [the heart] is the Well-Visited House (*al-bayt al-ma'mūr*) of God, since it contains Him. He says in a *ḥadīth*, "Neither my earth nor my heaven contains Me, but the heart of my pious slave contains Me." The rank of the Perfect Man in respect of his being the heart lies between God and the universe. He named it the heart (*qalb*) because of its altering (*taqlīb*) in every shape. "Every day He is [employing Himself] in an affair" [55/29,] and in his changing (*taṣrīf*) and his capability of changing. Because of this, he has this divine breadth (*si'a ilāhīya*).⁹

Ibn 'Arabī connects the word "heart" with the concept of altering (*taqlīb*) and sometimes with "transformation (*taqallub*)."¹⁰ The Perfect Man, the Sufi gnostic, constantly changes the shape of his heart in accordance with the changing shapes of God's self-manifestation. Only through this constant changing can he receive the totality of the Divine self-manifestations.

For the gnostic (*'ārif*) God is the one known who is never denied. . . . For this reason, He says "for those who have the heart (*qalb*)" [50,37,] i.e., those who know the shapes of the transformation (*taqallub*) of God by changing (*taqlīb*) his heart into [many] shapes.¹¹

⁸*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 120.

⁹*Futūḥāt*, 3:295.

¹⁰The explanation of the term *qalb* through *taqallub* is common among lexicographers. See Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 vols. (London, 1885; reprint ed., Beirut, 1968), 7:2553. This explanation seems to have been derived from the Qur'an, 24/37.

¹¹*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 122.

Ibn 'Arabī repeatedly emphasizes that God changes constantly His shapes in which He manifests Himself, and he quotes the *ḥadīth*, "God changes His forms in his Self-manifestation."¹² He expresses succinctly that the Self-manifestation of God never repeats itself,¹³ and the Perfect Man is the locus of His self-manifestation.

There is no one among existents (*mawjūdāt*) who can contain God except [the Perfect Man.] He does not contain Him except through receiving [His] image. He [the Perfect Man] is the locus of God's self-manifestation.¹⁴

However, there is the commonly held view that God manifests Himself in accordance with the predisposition (*isti'dād*) of man:¹⁵

I [God] will present things (*al-umūr*) to you [Ezra] by means of manifestations (*'alā tajallī*.) Manifestation will happen only in accordance with your predisposition (*isti'dād*), through which intuitive perception (*al-idrāk al-dhawqīya*) comes to you. Know that you will not perceive except in accordance with your predisposition.¹⁶

Ibn 'Arabī tries to reconcile this commonly-held view with his opinion that man receives the manifestation of God by transforming his heart in accordance with the shapes of His manifestation. For this purpose, he

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 120.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 124. *Futūḥāt*, 3:282; *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:172.

¹⁴*Futūḥāt*, 2:464.

¹⁵This is an ordinary man's understanding of God. He believes only in the particular shape in which God manifests Himself in accordance with his latent predisposition. H. Corbin calls this view *kathénouthéseisme mystique*. (H. Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice*, p. 152.) This God which is different for each person in accordance with his predisposition is called by Ibn 'Arabī the God-created-in-belief. He writes: "This is, indeed, the God which the slave [i.e., man] creates in his heart, either through his theoretical opinion or through his tradition. He is the God as the object of belief; (*al-ilāh al-mu'taqad*) this God varies in accordance with the predisposition (*isti'dād*) which is present in this place [i.e., the heart of each person.]" Then he quotes the words of Junayd, "The color of water is the color of its vessel." (*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 220.)

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 168.

introduces a distinction between the two types of manifestation; invisible (*tajallī al-ghayb*) and visible (*al-tajallī al-shuhūdī*).¹⁷

Through the first manifestation the initial predisposition is given to the heart. This constitutes the manifestation of the Divine Identity (*hūwīya*).¹⁸ Thereafter God manifests Himself in various visible shapes.

The first manifestation [i.e., that of the Divine Identity] should be interpreted through Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of the "unity of existence" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*.) This is the manifestation of God's absolute existence, and does not contain any multiplicity and differentiation. The existence of God is immanent in all existents equally.¹⁹ In this respect, man is not superior to any other existent in the universe.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 120. These two types of manifestation correspond to the most sacred emanation (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*) and the eternally manifesting emanation (*al-fayḍ al-tajjallī al-dā'im*), *ibid.*, p. 49, and also to the gifts of the Essence (*ʿaṭāyā dhātīya*) and the gifts of the Names (*ʿaṭāyā asmā'īya*), *ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁸*Hūwīya* is the abstract noun of the pronoun *hūwa* (he,) and usually rendered as "identity" or "ipseity." Nyberg relates this term to the expression of Ḥallāj, *hūwa hūwa*, (*Kleinere Schriften*, p. 93, n. 2.) However, in the medieval Arabic translation of Plotinus, *to einai* (existence) is rendered as *hūwīya*. Hence *hūwīya* seems to be a synonym of *wujūd* (existence); cf. S. Pinès, "Les Textes arabes dits plotiniens et le courant porphyrien dans le néoplatonisme grec," *Le Néoplatonisme, Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (Paris, 1971), pp. 305-307; p. 313. Thus the *hūwīya* of God means His Existence, that is, the Absolute Existence. It must be also noted that in Ibn 'Arabi the Divine Essence (*dhāt*) is identical with the Absolute Existence. (Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 5.) Therefore, the *hūwīya* of God can be also interpreted as "the unknowable incommunicable Essence of God." (*Ibid.*, p. 12; p. 24, n. 1.) According to T. P. Hughes, some Qur'anic commentators have supposed the word *Hū* (i.e. *hūwa*) to stand for the exalted name of God, the *ism al'a'zam*, which is only known to God. (T. P. Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam* [Delhi, 1973], p. 181.) However, as for the *hūwīya* as the translation of the Greek word *to einai*, it might have been derived from the Syriac copula *hwā* (to be,) not from the Arabic pronoun *hūwa*.

¹⁹"Were it not for the permeation (*saryān*) of God, by means of His form (*ṣūra*), in all existents, the universe would have no existence, just as, were it not for the intelligible, universal realities, no predication (*ḥukm*) would be manifest in concrete existents (*mawjūd ʿaynīya*)." (*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 55.)

The second manifestation is that of the Divine Names. In this manifestation, God manifests Himself in various shapes of the universe according to the latent predisposition of each existent. In other words, the Divine Names manifest themselves as the realities of the existents in the universe. In the case of man, God manifests Himself in his heart as the God-created-in-his-belief (*al-Ḥaqq al-makhlūq fī al-i'tiqād.*)²⁰ It means that man knows and sees God in one of the Divine Names peculiar to him. This God is in reality his own self reflected in the mirror of Divinity.²¹ However, if one believes only in the God-created-in-his-belief, he cannot be said to be the synthesis of all the Divine Names, because he restricts the infinite possibilities of the manifestation of God to one particular shape, and denies His manifestation in other shapes.

He who restricts God [to the God-created-in-his-belief] denies Him in other beliefs, affirming Him only when He is manifest in his own belief. He who does not restrict Him thus does not deny Him, but affirms God in every shape of His manifestation, worshipping Him in His infinite shapes, since there is no limit to the shapes in which He manifests Himself.²²

God is manifest in every created being and in every concept.²³ The gnostic is the one who sees God in everything,²⁴ and worships Him in the

²⁰See *supra*, n. 15, and Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice*, pp. 151-54.

²¹*Fuṣūṣ*, pp 61, 113, 184.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 121.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 192. Ibn 'Arabī also writes: "The perfect gnostic (*al-ʿarīf al-mukammal*) is the one who sees every object of worship (*maʿbūd*) as the locus of the manifestation (*majallī*) of God in which He is worshipped. For this reason, they name it a God (*ʾālih*), although its particular name might be stone, tree, animal, man, or angel." (*Ibid.*, p. 190.) "If one understands the meaning of Junayd's words, 'The color of water is the color of its vessel,' he would allow every believer his belief, and know God in every form and belief." (*Ibid.*, p. 226.) Thus the gnostics' understanding of God transcends *kathēnothēisme mystique*. (*supra*, n. 15.) "Il semble que pour Ibn 'Arabī, une

infinite shapes of His manifestation.

Ibn 'Arabī contrasts the heart with the intellect (*‘aql*) as an instrument to know God.²⁵ The latter restricts and tries to define God within the framework of the God-created-in belief. It is the instrument used by theologians and philosophers. But the heart of the gnostic accepts every shape of God's manifestation by changing its own shape. In this way the totality of the Divine Names are manifested in him. As we have seen in the first chapter, this totality, that is, the synthesis which Adam, the Perfect Man possesses, characterizes human existence, and gives man the rank of the vicegerent of God on earth. On the other hand, those who limit God's manifestation to one particular shape, that is, to one particular Divine Name, cannot be said to realize this synthesis. In this respect, they are not different from animals. Only a Sufi gnostic, who sees the manifestation of the Divine Names in every existent of the universe, can be called the Perfect Man.

In the next section, we deal with Ibn 'Arabī's theory of sainthood, and its difference from prophethood.

Sainthood and Prophethood

In the hundred sixty-seventh chapter of the *Futūḥāt*, Ibn 'Arabī expresses the rank of Perfection as vicegerency conferred on Adam:

Know that as for the desired perfection (*al-kamāl al-maṭlūb*) for which man is created -- that is, vicegerency -- Adam attained it through divine providence (*‘ināya ilāhīya*.) This (i.e., vicegerency) is more particular (*akhaṣṣ*) than messengership (*risāla*) of messengers, because not every mes-

explication inverse de ce 'Kathénothéisme mystique' vaille préférence quand il s'agit du gnostique (*‘ārīf*.) Ce n'est pas le cœur qui donne sa 'couleur' à la Forme qu'il reçoit, mais inversement le cœur du gnostique 'se colore' à chaque instant de la couleur, c'est-à-dire de la modalité de la Forme sous laquelle l'Etre Divin s'épiphane à lui." Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice*, p. 152.

²⁵*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 122.

senger is vicegerent. The rank of messengership lies especially in transmission (*tablīgh*) . . . He (i.e., the messenger) does not have (his own) domination (*taḥakkum*, i.e., autarchic action); he has only legislation (*tashrīʿ*) of ordinance (*ḥukm*) from God . . . If God gives him dominion over those to whom he was sent, then this is [the case of] the appointment of a vicegerent (*istikhlāf*) and vicegerency [i.e., in this case he is both the messenger and the vicegerent.] Not every one who is sent [as messenger] has dominion. When he is given the sword and carries out actions, at that time he possesses perfection and manifests the sovereignty (*sulṭān*) of the Divine Names . . . When he shows dominance without prophethood (*nubūwa*), then he is a king (*malik*), not a vicegerent. No one is vicegerent [in the real sense of the word] except those whom God appointed vicegerent over His slaves. Those who are elected by people, acknowledged by them, and appointed by themselves over themselves are not vicegerents. This [the true vicegerency] is the rank of perfection. It is permitted for souls to make efforts to obtain the station (*maqām*) of perfection. But it is not [allowed] for them to make efforts to obtain prophethood. Vicegerency may be obtainable (*muktasaba*), but prophethood is not obtainable.²⁶

In the above passage, three important concepts, "vicegerency," "messengership," and "prophethood" are used. The first term "vicegerency" is the rank of perfection, and the vicegerent corresponds to the Perfect Man symbolized by Adam. In the *ʿUqlat al-Mustawfiz* it is said:

God made them vicegerents (*khalāʾif*) after there had been a vicegerent [i.e., Adam.] Every perfect one (*kāmil*) is a vicegerent. There is no period which lacks a perfect one. There is no lack of a vicegerent and an Imam. The earth is never devoid of manifestation (*zuhūr*) of the Divine image.²⁷

Although it is said that vicegerency is more special than messengership and that all messengers are not vicegerents, still not all vicegerents are messengers either.²⁸ If this were the case, there would be no vicegerents after Muḥammad. Ibn ʿArabī must mean that vicegerents are more chosen and higher than messengers: the latter only transmit messages, while the former have the power to judge and rule. However,

²⁶*Futūḥāt*, 2:272.

²⁷*ʿUqlat al-Mustawfiz*, p. 97.

²⁸*Futūḥāt*, 2:72.

those who have only dominion and do not have prophethood are not vicegerents, but secular kings. Therefore, the real vicegerent, the Perfect Man, must have both dominion and prophethood. However, it is also clearly stated that prophethood is unobtainable.²⁹ How can one obtain the rank of perfection, that is vicegerency, without obtaining prophethood? This difficulty can be only solved when we distinguish two types of prophethood, that is, the prophethood which is obtainable after Muḥammad, and the prophethood which is impossible to obtain after Muḥammad.

Ibn ʿArabī does, in fact, distinguish two types of prophethood: general prophethood (*al-nubūwa al-ʿamma*) and the prophethood of legislation (*nubūwa al-tashrīʿ*).³⁰ The former is also called absolute prophethood (*al-nubūwa al-muṭlaqa*)³¹ and the prophethood of [divine] instruction (*nubūwa al-taʿrīf*).³² The latter is identical with messengership (*risāla*).³³

Messengership is not general, but particular in two points. First, the law (*sharʿ*) which a messenger brings is intended for the whole community, therefore it is limited by the community's ability to understand it and also by their need.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*Futūḥāt*, 2:3,24,256. Concerning the doctrine of Ibn ʿArabī's theory of prophethood and sainthood, see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints: Prophétie et sainteté dans la doctrine d'Ibn Arabī* (Paris, 1986), pp. 65-78. Unfortunately it was too late for me to make full use of this important book in my present study.

³¹*Futūḥāt*, 2:19,53.

³²*Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:265-6.

³³Ibn ʿArabī sometimes seems to differentiate the two at least in manner of speech, e.g., "Messengership and prophethood -- I mean the prophethood of legislation and its messengership -- come to an end (*tanqāṭiʿāni*)."*(Fuṣūṣ*, p. 62). However, nowhere does he explain differences between them.

Know that messengers, as [the qualification of] messengers, not [as the qualification of] saints (*awliyā'*) and gnostics (*ʿārīfūn*) are in accordance with the levels (*marātib*) on which their communities (*umam*) are; the knowledge (*ʿilm*) with which they are sent is in accordance with the need of their respective communities; no more and no less. Some communities are superior to others. Therefore, some messengers are superior to others in knowledge of transmission (*irsāl*) in accordance with the degree of superiority of their communities.³⁴

Then he quotes the Qur'anic passage, "Those messengers to some of whom we gave preference over others." (2:253.)

Secondly, the knowledge which messengers bring only concerns the permitted and the prohibited. They are only applicable to this world (*al-dunyā*), however, they lose their applicability in the next world.³⁵ The prophethood of legislation came to an end with Muḥammad, and after him no one can add to nor cancel the laws which he brought.³⁶ What is left after him is the general prophethood without legislation. It is this general prophethood which is called "sainthood" (*walāya*.)

Know that sainthood (*walāya*) is the general (*ʿāmm*), comprehensive (*muḥīṭ*) sphere. Therefore it was not cut off. It [sainthood] has [the function of] general transmission (*inbā' ʿāmm*.) As for the prophethood of legislation and messenger-ship, they are ended. It is ended with Muḥammad. There is no prophet after him . . . However, God is kind to His servants, and left the general prophethood which does not have the [function of] legislation.³⁷

The general prophethood has the function of receiving the divine knowledge directly from God, as its other name "prophethood of divine instruction" indicates.

It is possible that this saint is given the knowledge of [divine] secrets which was given to the prophets, because this does not belong to the characteristics of prophethood. The

³⁴*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 132.

³⁵*Futūḥāt*, 2:256.

³⁶*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 132.

³⁷*Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:265-66.

lawgiver (*shārīʿ*) does not interdict this gate to his community. Rather, he [Muhammad] said, "if there are in my community those who are spoken to by God (*muḥaddathūn*), then 'Umar is among them." Thus, the Prophet affirmed that there are those who are spoken to by God among those who are not prophets. What is spoken by God to such a man is outside the legislation (*tashrīʿ*) of legal judgments (*aḥkām*) concerning the allowed (*ḥalāl*) and the prohibited (*ḥarām*), because this [i.e., legislation] is among the characteristics (*khaṣā'is*) of prophethood of legislation (*nubūwa al-tashrīʿ*). Rather, it permeates (*saryān*) [all] the slaves of God, both in messengers and saints, in the followers and the followed.³⁸

The knowledge given by God without any intermediary to saints is different from the knowledge given to messengers with the intermediation of angels.³⁹ Ibn 'Arabī often uses the story of Khadir and Moses in the Qur'an as an example. Khadir, the saint, is given by God the most secret knowledge (*'ilm ladunnī*), which is beyond the understanding of Moses, the messenger.⁴⁰ However, from this, Ibn 'Arabī does not draw the conclusion that saints are, therefore, superior to messengers, because messengers receive not only the sacred laws through the angels, but also divine knowledge which does not concern the sacred laws, directly from God.

The messenger does not take this judgement (*ḥukm*) except through descent of the *rūḥ al-amīn* [i.e., the Angel Gabriell] on his heart or through an image (*mithāl*) in his witnessing, in which the angel takes on the likeness of man When prophethood and also messengership had been declared impossible after the Messenger of God, this person [i.e., the saint] has [divine] instruction (*taʿrīf*) about the Muḥammadan Law over him in the sensible world. If there is [a saint] in the period of legislation, just as there is [Khadir], in the period of Moses, the divine judgement would appear to this saint as it appeared to Khadir, without intermediacy of an angel, rather from the presence of proximity (*ḥadra al-qurb*). Both prophets and messengers have [also] the presence of proximity just as saints have. However, they [i.e., messengers] do not have legislation from the

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 251.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 364-65.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 365.

presence of proximity, they only have legislation through the angel.⁴¹

In other words, prophets and messengers are all saints and receive both the sacred law and divine gnosis. The concept of sainthood contains in it prophethood of legislation, i.e., messengership, which is why sainthood is said to be more general and comprehensive.

Know that sainthood is comprehensive (*muḥīṭa*) and general (*ʿamma*.) It is a great circle (*dā'ira*.) Within its characteristic (*ḥukm*) is that God entrusts whomsoever of slaves He wishes with prophethood. This is one of the characteristics (*aḥkām*) of sainthood. He may entrust him with messengership. This is also one of the characteristics of sainthood. Every messenger must be a prophet, and every prophet must be a saint. Therefore, every messenger must be a saint. Messengership is a particular station in sainthood . . . The reality (*ḥaqīqa*) of messengership is the transmission (*iblāgh*) of words from a speaker to a listener; therefore this is a [transitory] condition (*ḥāl*), not a [permanent] station (*maqām*.) It does not have permanence (*baqā'*) after the transmission is executed, although it can be renewed (*tatajad-dad*.)⁴²

Therefore, if some Sufis say that saints are superior to messengers, it must be understood that within one and the same person, the function of sainthood is higher than that of messengership, because they are not referring to two different persons.

If you see the prophet speak about matters outside legislation, he is speaking as (*min ḥayth*) a saint and a gnostic (*ʿārif*.) Therefore, his station as a knower (*ʿālim*) is more complete (*atamm*) and more perfect than his station as a messenger and a possessor of legislation and the sacred law. If you hear one of the people of God (*ahl Allāh*) say, or it is reported to you that he said that the saint is above the prophet and the messenger, he who says this only wants to express what I mentioned above, namely he means with this [what is] in one person: he means that the Prophet as a saint (*min ḥayth hūwa walī*) is more complete than as a prophet and a messenger.⁴³

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 364-66.

⁴²*Futūḥāt*, 2:256-57.

⁴³*Fuṣūṣ*, p. 135.

However, there still remains the question of superiority between the Prophet and saints. Ibn 'Arabi continues the above quotation as follows:

It is not that the saint who follows him [Muhammad] is higher than him. Indeed, the follower (*tābi'*) can never reach the one who is followed (*matbū'*) insofar as he is a follower of him.⁴⁴

The saints who follow the sacred law brought by Muhammad can never reach the rank of Muhammad. Obviously the saint who has also the function of legislation is higher than those without it. However, according to Ibn 'Arabi, the saints follow the sacred law brought by Muhammad only in the outer sense. In the inner sense, they receive the same knowledge as the Prophet from the same source, i.e., from God. In this sense, they are equal in rank.

God has on earth His vicegerents (*khalā'if*); they are the messengers. As for the vicegerency of the present day, they are [vicegerents] of the prophets, but not of God. They do not govern (*yahkumūna*) except through the laws which the Messenger gave them; they do not go outside this law. However, here is a subtle point (*daqīqa*) which only people like us know. This [subtle point] concerns [the manner of] receiving the law brought by Muhammad through which they govern. The vicegerents of the prophet are those who take the authority (*ḥukm*) through transmission from him [i.e., Muhammad] or through *ijtihād*, whose basis is also transmitted from him. However, among us, there are those who receive it from God. Then he [such a man] is a vicegerent of God through this selfsame authority. The source (*mādda*) [of his authority] is the same source from which the Prophet took his authority. Such a man outwardly (*fī al-zāhir*) follows [the Prophet,] because he has no contradiction in his judgment (*ḥukm*) [against the sacred Law] . . . he is with regard to what he knows concerning the manner (*ṣūra*) of reception is special (*mukhtaṣṣ*) (*mukhtaṣṣ*) and in complete agreement [with the prophets] . . . Thus [the manner in which] the vicegerent receives from God is the same as that of the messenger. We say of him [such a man] in the esoteric expression (*bī lisān al-kashf*) "the vicegerent of God" and in the esoteric expression (*bī lisān al-zāhir*) "the vicegerent of the messenger of God."⁴⁵

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.

Although Ibn 'Arabī is very cautious about the problem of superiority between saints and prophets, it can be seen in the above passage that he is very clear about saints' superiority to those religious scholars who receive the judgements only through the transmission from Muḥammad.

Of course, Ibn 'Arabī does not deny the value of religious scholars, because they also preserve the knowledge of the prophets through the intermediary of transmitters. They are the preservers of the legal judgements of Muḥammad (*ḥafiẓa al-ḥukm al-nabawī*), while saints are the preservers of the prophetic condition (*ḥafiẓa al-ḥāl al-nabawī*) and the secret knowledge (*ʿilm ladunnī*.)

In the *ḥadīth* it is said that the knowers (*ʿulamā'*) of this community are the prophets of Israelites. They [i.e., the prophets] preserved for them [i.e., Israelites] the sacred laws (*sharā'ī'*) of their messengers and carried them out among them. The same is true of the knowers of the companions (*ṣaḥāba*) [of the Prophet,] of the followers, and of the followers of the followers . . . But the other group of knowers of this community preserve for the community conditions (*alwāl*) of the Messenger and the secrets of his knowledge (*ʿulūm*.) The secrets of the preservers of the judgement (*ḥukm*) [of the Prophet] stop (*mawqūfa*) at the Footstool (*kur-sī*) of the two Feet (*qadamayn*), since they do not have a prophetic condition which gives them a divine secret, nor do they have the mystic knowledge (*ʿilm ladunnī*.) The secrets of the preservers of the prophetic condition and the mystic knowledge as compared to knowers and preservers of the prophetic judgement only stop at the Throne and the Dark Cloud (*ʿamā'*) or they do not stop at all.⁴⁶

Although both religious scholars and saints are preservers of the prophetic knowledge, the knowledge of the saints is higher and more certain than that of the religious scholars. Ibn 'Arabī emphasizes the superiority of the saints' knowledge on two points; the problem of the authenticity of the *ḥadīth* and the application of anthropomorphic expressions to God. The *ḥadīth* scholars judge the authenticity of a *ḥadīth* on the basis of the continuity of *isnād* and the reliability of

⁴⁶*Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 2:361.

the transmitters. This is a mechanical procedure and there is no inner religious consideration for its content. However, Ibn 'Arabī gives priority to direct divine instruction for determining the authenticity of *ḥadīth*. Even if all the *ḥadīth* scholars declare a *ḥadīth* to be true, it is false when God instructs a saint that it is false. The judgement of *ḥadīth* scholars is ultimately human judgement, and fallible, while the judgement of saints is divine judgement, and infallible.⁴⁷

Secondly, Ibn 'Arabī defends the saints' use of such anthropomorphic expressions as "laughter," "surprise," "smile," "anger," "hesitation," "hatred," "love," and "desire" in regard to God. Because these expressions appear in *ḥadīths*, and also these expressions come to the saint directly from God in the same manner as they come to the prophet, it is unjust to blame the saint and believe in the words of the prophet.⁴⁸ This apologia is obviously addressed to theologians who tried to avoid any trace of anthropomorphism concerning God. And Ibn 'Arabī expresses his anger toward these religious scholars hostile to Sufism.

Where is your justice (*inṣāf*)? Does justice exist among jurists, rational thinkers (*aṣḥāb al-afkār*) who are the pharaohs to the saints and Anti-Christ to the pious slaves of God?⁴⁹

Also in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*, there are numerous places where Ibn 'Arabī criticizes the intolerance of conventional religious scholars (*ʿulamā' al-rusūm*.) He especially attacks the jurists, who flatter the rulers by employing various legal tricks.⁵⁰

⁴⁷*Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 2:358-59.

⁴⁸*Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:250.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁵⁰For instance, *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 4:263-77; *Futūḥāt*, 3:335-36. cf. Maḥmūd Qāsim, *Al-Khayāl fī Madhhab Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī* (Cairo, 1969), pp. 100-107.

Ibn 'Arabī emphasizes again and again that the knowledge of the saints is based on direct personal experiences, therefore, it is infallible. For instance, in *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīya*, it is explained in the following manner.

If someone scares you away from the Way, saying to you, "Ask the people of the Way to show the proof (*dalīl*) and demonstration (*burhān*) for the divine secrets (*asrār ilāhīya*) which they speak about," then ask him back, saying "What is the proof for the sweetness of honey? What is the proof for the pleasure of sexual intercourse and its like? Inform me about the essence of this thing." Then he can only say that this is a kind of knowledge which can be obtained only through direct experience (*dhawq*), it does not fall under any definition, and it cannot be proven. Then say to him, "This is like that."⁵¹

Ibn 'Arabī proceeds to give the following parable for the infallibility of the knowledge of the saints: A certain person built a house by himself, and did not allow anyone to see its inside, but rumor about the house was spread abroad, and people learned about it. The owner of the house chose one of his friends, took him inside, and showed it to him. When the chosen one left the house, he told the people what he saw inside it. In this case, it is absurd to ask him for the proof and demonstration for his story. One should simply believe what one has been told and wish that some day, he also would have the opportunity to enter the house and see its inside with his own eyes. And Ibn 'Arabī concludes that the secret knowledge (*ʿilm ladunnī*) which God conferred upon Khadir, and also upon the saints is of this kind, and those who cannot have direct experience of it can do nothing but believe.⁵²

⁵¹*al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīya*, p. 114.

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

Like Tirmidhī, Ibn ʿArabī classifies the saints according to a hierarchical order.⁵³ His classification is much more complicated and extensive. First, he distinguishes the classes of the saints into those whose number is fixed at any given time and those whose number varies according to the ages.⁵⁴ The number of saints who belong to the first category is five hundred and eighty-nine, and there are thirty-five classes, beginning from the one *quṭb*, followed by the two imāms, the four *awṭād* (pegs,) and the seven *abdāl* (substitutes) and so on. Here, however, we would like to examine two classes of the saints which belong to the second category, namely the *muqarrabūn*⁵⁵ and the *afrād*,⁵⁶ because they seem to realize Ibn ʿArabī's idea of sainthood best.

The *muqarrabūn* are placed between the prophets who bring the Law and the *ṣiddīqūn*⁵⁷ who believe in the words of the prophet and attain the knowledge of *tawḥīd* which the prophet brought.⁵⁸ They believe only through the light of faith (*nūr al-imān*) without receiving any direct revelation from God. On the other hand, the *muqarrabūn* acquire the

⁵³The most extensive classification is found in the *Futūḥāt*, 2:6-23. Some of these classes are treated in Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints*, pp. 129-143.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵⁵The other name is *ahl al-qurba* (the people of proximity.) Their description is found in the *Futūḥāt*, 2:24-25, 41. The term *muqarrabūn* appears in the Qur'an (e.g., 56/11, 88.) According to Ibn ʿArabī, the term *manzil al-qurba* (the station of proximity) was first introduced to Sufism by Abu ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Sulamī. (*al-Jawāb al-Mustaqīm*, in Tirmidhī, *Khatm*, p. 144.) However, *muqarrabūn* and *ahl al-qurba* as designation of Sufi saints already appear in Tirmidhī. See *Khatm*, p. 359.

⁵⁶The singular form *fard* (individual) is one of the Names of God (*Futūḥāt*, [ed. Yahya,] 4:246).

⁵⁷The word *ṣiddīq* occurs in the Qur'an (e.g., 4/69; 57/19). Also it is the nickname of Abū Bakr. For the use of this term in Tirmidhī, see *infra*, p. 133.

⁵⁸*Futūḥāt*, 2:24, 41.

knowledge of *tawhīd* directly from God, guided by the light of knowledge (*nūr al-ʿilm*), just like the prophets. In other words, their knowledge of God does not depend on the teachings of the prophets. Then, he affirms that knowledge is higher than faith, quoting the Qur'anic verse, "God witnesses that there is no God but He, and so do the angels and those possessed of knowledge" (3/18.)⁵⁹ The *ṣiddīqūn* who transmit the words of God carefully and believe in them and thereby attain the knowledge of God through faith correspond to the religious scholars (especially *ḥadīth* scholars) who are called preservers of the prophetic judgement in the previous section. On the other hand, the *muqarrabūn* correspond to the saints in general. In fact, Ibn ʿArabī calls the station "the station of absolute prophethood" (*maqām al-nubūwa al-muṭlaqa*)⁶⁰ or "the station of general prophethood" (*maqām al-nubūwa al-ʿamma*.)⁶¹

The *afrād* seems to be another name for the *muqarrabūn*, because it is said that the *afrād* possess "the station of proximity" (*maqām al-qurba*) which is placed between legislative prophethood (*nubūwat al-tashrīʿ*) and the *ṣiddīqīya*.⁶² What then does Ibn ʿArabī mean by the term *afrād*? The term *afrād* is defined as those who are outside the hierarchy governed by the *quṭb*.⁶³ The *quṭb* does not have any control over them. They receive the inner knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-bāṭin*) from the Presence of proximity (*ḥaḍrat al-qurba*.)⁶⁴ Ibn ʿArabī writes as

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶³ *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:245; cf. *Iṣṭilāḥ al-Ṣufīya*, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:265-66.

follows concerning Muḥammad Ibn Qā'id, one of the companions of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlī.

It is said that Ibn Qā'id saw only the step (*qadam*) of the Prophet in front of him. Therefore he must belong to the class of the *afrād*. If he were not a *fard*, but an Imam, he would have seen the step of the *quṭb* of his time in addition to the step of the Prophet. If he were a *watad*, he would have seen three steps. If he were a *badal*, he would have seen four steps.⁶⁵

Khadir is one of the *afrād*, and so was ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib.⁶⁶ Muḥammad was also a *fard* before he became prophet.⁶⁷ It is interesting to note that the *quṭb* himself is a *fard*.⁶⁸ And Ibn ʿArabī mentions the names of many Sufis who belong to the class of the *afrād*.⁶⁹

Among the classes of the saints in the first category, there are those who follow the "heart" of various angels and prophets.⁷⁰ However, it is only the *afrād* who follow "the heart" of Muḥammad.⁷¹ "To follow the heart of Muḥammad" means to receive the same manifestations of God as Muḥammad received through the same transformation of the heart as that of Muḥammad.⁷² Therefore, they are prophets, although they do not bring new Laws. Ibn ʿArabī properly calls them the prophet-saints

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁶⁶For Khadir, *Futūḥāt*, 2:19. For ʿAlī, *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:248.

⁶⁷*Futūḥāt*, 2:19.

⁶⁸Ibn ʿArabī, *Kitāb al-Masā'il*, p. 28, in *Rasā'il Ibn al-ʿArabī*, vol. 2. In the *Futūḥāt*, 2:6, the *quṭb* is said to be one of the *muqarrabūn*.

⁶⁹*Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:256-57.

⁷⁰*Futūḥāt*, 2:9-11.

⁷¹*Futūḥāt*, 4:78.

⁷²*Futūḥāt*, 2:9.

(*al-anbiyā' al-awliyā'*.)⁷³ It is the *afrād* who are the real heirs of Muḥammad.

In the next section, first we shall examine the theory of sainthood in Ḥakīm Tirmidhī and then, by comparing it to Ibn 'Arabī's early theory of sainthood, we hope to elucidate the development of Ibn 'Arabī's theory and its originality.

Ḥakīm Tirmidhī

It is well-known that Ḥakīm Tirmidhī is the first who elaborated the theory of sainthood. Although the concept of sainthood appears much earlier than him in numerous *ḥadīths*, it is he who made the concept of saints the cornerstone of all his writings, and all later Sufis based their theory of sainthood on Tirmidhī. Ibn 'Arabī's theory of sainthood is no exception. Tirmidhī's theory of sainthood has attracted the attention of many scholars, especially since the publication of his most important book, *Khatm al-Awliyā'* by Osman Yahya.⁷⁴ His theory of sainthood is complex and lengthy; here we have to limit our discussion to the aspect of his doctrine which seems to have influenced Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of sainthood.

The Hierarchy of Saints

Tirmidhī classifies saints into two categories according to the manner they proceed, based on the Qur'anic verse, "God chooses unto himself those whom He wills, and guides to Himself those who turn to Him repen-

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁷⁴The important works are: Muḥammad Ibraheem Geyoushi, "Al-Tirmidhī's Theory of Saints and Sainthood," *Islamic Quarterly* 15 (1971): 17-61; *idem.*, *Al-Ḥakīm Al-Tirmidhī: Dirāsa li-āthārihi wa afkār-ihi* (Cairo, n.d.); 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Abd Allāh Baraka, *Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī wa Naẓariyatuhu fī al-walāya*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1971); Yves Marquet, *Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī et le neoplatonisme de son temps* (Dakar, 1976); Bernd Ratdke, *Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, Ein islamischer Theosoph des 3./9. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg, 1980).

tantly." [42/13.]⁷⁵ The first category, which is called "the people of divine guidance and turning (to God)" (*ahl al-hidāya wa al-ināba*,) include those who exert tremendous efforts to proceed on their way to God, undergoing many trials and battles against their own soul (*nafs*.) The second category, which is called "the people of divine choice and will" (*ahl al-jibāya wa al-mashī'a*) or "the chosen ones" (*muḥtabūn*) or "those drawn (by God to God)" (*majdhūbūn*), is those who are chosen by God from the beginning, and protected by God against all errors and temptations all through their way to God through divine providence (*ʿināya ilāhīya*.)

Besides the above classification, Tirmidhī also classifies saints according to their levels, although this classification is not always clear because of his loose and ambiguous use of terms. The lowest level is called *ṣādiqūn* and sometimes also *awliyā' ḥaqq Allāh* ("the saints of duty toward God" in Geyoushi's translation, *gottesfreund*, *der unter der aufsicht des sollens steht* in Radtke's translation.)⁷⁶ They approach God through their own *ṣidq* (sincerity) with severe struggles with their own souls, always acting under the permission of God. The description of their state corresponds to the first category of the previous classification. Their place (*maḥall*) is in the lower heaven (*samā' dunyā*) which is called symbolically "The House of Power" (*Bayt al-ʿizza*.) Their long and difficult fight against their souls is a favorite subject of Tirmidhī, and is treated in detail in his various writings. When they find themselves in utter distress in their inhuman

⁷⁵*Khatm*, pp. 407-410; Marquet, *Tirmidhī*, pp. 59-63; Baraka, 2:113-139.

⁷⁶Geyoushi, "Saints and Sainthood," p. 34; Radtke, p. 93. The term *awliya' ḥaqq Allāh* only occurs in the *Khatm*, pp. 117-127. Concerning the *ṣādiqūn*, see *Khatm*, p. 137.

efforts in battles against the soul, they finally turn to God desperately for help, then God answers their cry, and raises them to the higher place. Here, Tirmidhī quotes the Qur'anic verse, "Or, who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil, and makes you vicegerents in the earth." (27/62.) Thus they become the *awliyā' Allāh* from the *awliyā' ḥaqq Allāh*.

This second rank is called *al-aḥrār al-kirām* (the free and noble.)⁷⁷ Their place is that of proximity (*maḥall al-qurba*), which is symbolically called "the well-visited House" (*al-Bayt al-ma'mūr*.) This rank is shared by both categories of the first classification. However, for the people of the first category, the place of proximity is not a secure position; once they arrive at this position, they may be overtaken by vanity and pride, and their old enemy, the soul, can again find its way to their heart. Then, they will fall down to the previous position. On the other hand, those who are chosen by God and drawn to Him step by step through divine providence are immune from these dangers without any conscious efforts.

The third rank is called *ṣiddīqūn*.⁷⁸ They are the saints (*awliyā' Allāh*) *par excellence*. It is the highest rank the people of divine guidance can achieve.⁷⁹ The *ṣiddīqūn* attain the *majālis al-najwā* (sittings with God in intimacy.) They possess *firāsa* (intuitive knowledge,) *ilhām* (inspiration,) and above all, *ṣiddīqīya* (veridical vision.)⁸⁰ Their place is in *mulk al-mulk* (the kingdom of the kingdom,)

⁷⁷*Khatm*, pp. 359-361, 371. cf. Marquet, *Tirmidhī*, pp. 47-50.

⁷⁸For the term, see *supra*, p. 128, n. 57. cf. Marquet, *Tirmidhī*, pp. 51-54. Baraka, 2: 101-112.

⁷⁹Marquet, *Tirmidhī*, p. 63.

⁸⁰*Khatm*, pp. 352-53. See *infra*, p. 144.

which is the highest of the ten kingdoms which they must pass in order to acquire the ten qualities (*khisāl*) of sainthood.⁸¹ These kingdoms are: *jabarūt*, *sultān*, *jalāl*, *jamāl*, *ʿazama*, *hayba*, *raḥma*, *bahāʾ*, *bahja*, and *fardānīya* or *waḥdānīya*, which is also called *mulk al-mulk*, and they, as a whole, make up the supreme kingdom of Divine Attributes. The saints are transported from one kingdom to another, acquiring in each kingdom its corresponding divine quality. Each kingdom consists of states (*maqāmāt*,) and each quality is subdivided, thus, there are as many divine qualities as the Names of God, that is, there are altogether one hundred divine qualities. In other words, saints must assimilate the Divine Attributes which the Divine Names represent, and acquire the Godly characters.

The highest rank is *muḥaddathūn*.⁸² This is the rank promised only to the second category of saints. They are all called *munfaridūn*.⁸³ and their rank, the rank of *infirād*.⁸⁴ They are the leaders of the saints (*sādāt al-awliyāʾ*)⁸⁵ and even placed between the saints and the prophets.⁸⁶ In addition to *firāsa*, *ilhām*, and *ṣiddiqīya*, they possess *ḥadīth*, by which they are distinguished from other saints.⁸⁷ As a link between the saints and the prophets they have close similar-

⁸¹*Khatm*, pp. 333-336. According to Ibn ʿArabī, Tirmidhī is the first who used the term *mulk al-mulk*. (*Futūḥāt*, [ed. Yahya] 3:163.)

⁸²*Khatm*, pp. 351-58. The term *muḥaddath* is especially applied to ʿUmar in the *ḥadīth*, See *infra*, 139.

⁸³Tirmidhī, *al-Kalām ʿalā Maʿnā lā ilāha illā Allāh aw Shī-fāʾ al-ʿilal*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Jayūshī (Cairo, n.d.), p. 29.

⁸⁴*Khatm*, p. 406.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶*al-Kalām ʿalā Maʿnā*, p. 29

⁸⁷*Khatm*, pp. 352-353. See *infra*, 144.

ties to the prophets, and their *ḥadīth* to revelation (*waḥy*.) Indeed, Tirmidhī very often compares the prophets with the saints, especially with the *muḥaddathūn*. In the next section, we will see how Tirmidhī explains the similarities and differences among messengers, prophets and saints.

Messengers, Prophets and Saints

Tirmidhī places prophets and messengers next to the *muḥaddathūn* in the ascending order of the saints which we have analyzed in the previous section. This is most clearly described in the following passage of his work, the *Maʿrifat al-Asrār*.

Intellect is noble; faith is nobler; *ṣiddiqīya* is nobler than faith, because one cannot be a *ṣiddīq* except with intellect and faith. *Ṣiddiqīya* is the beginning of prophethood, while the *ṣiddiqīya* of prophethood is different from the *ṣiddiqīya* of the community (*umma*,) just as God said, "Mention in the Book Abraham. Indeed, he was a *ṣiddīq*, and a prophet." (19/41.) Thus also Idris was a *ṣiddīq* that is, he was a *ṣiddīq* when he was young, and became a prophet when he grew up. *Ḥadīth* is nobler than *ṣiddiqīya*. *Ḥadīth* is the middle of prophethood and the end of *ḥadīth* is prophethood . . . Prophethood is the completion of the rank (*tamām al-daraja*.) Messengership is nobler than prophethood. Vicegerency (*khilāfa*) in messengership is nobler than messengership without vicegerency. Speech (*kalām*) in messengership is nobler than vicegerency in messengership. Intimacy (*khulla*) in messengership is nobler than speech in messengership. *Ḥadīth* in messengership is nobler than intimacy in messengership. Increase (*mazīd*) from God never ceases, because He does not have any limit. Prophethood is a complete condition (*ḥāla tāmma*.) What is added to it is an addition to excess (*faḍl*,) not an addition to deficiency (*nuqṣān*.)⁸⁸

The manner in which *muḥaddathūn* are chosen by God from the beginning is the same as that for prophets. And they call people to God with clear proof together with the Prophet.

Concerning the calling to God, [it is] promulgation (*nashr*) for grace, the sending (*baʿth*) from the benevolence (*minan*), recollection (*dhikr*) of His blessings (*ālāʾ*), and declara-

⁸⁸Tirmidhī, *Kitāb Maʿrifat al-Asrār*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Jayūshī (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 66-67.

tion of the absolute transcendence of God in His unity. This calling belongs only to the followers of Muḥammad. His followers are those who proceed to God on their way. However, the way (*ṭarīqa*) of saints is not the way of prophets, since prophets are the people whom God chooses with His will, while saints are the people who God guides through their turning to Him repentantly. This was made clear in the sending down (*tanzīl*) of His words, "God chooses to Himself those whom He wills, and guides to Himself those who turn to Him repentantly." [42/13.] God draws to Himself the heart of whoever He chooses, then leads it to Him in the way of those whom He draws to Himself. As for those who turn repentantly to God, the way of "turning (*ināba*) to God" opens to them, and He guides them. The way of prophets is a shortened way, while the way of saints is the way of the main street (*jādda*), which He prescribed for His servants, based on sincerity (*ṣidq*), faithfulness (*wafā'*) and through purification of the heart and the cleansing of their character, so that they may reach Him. Prophets are led [to God] by way of attraction (*jidhba*), not by way of the soul (*nafs*.) This is a difference between prophets and saints. However, God has among saints the elite (*ṣafwa*), whom He chooses, so that they may become His servants and callers to God. Tomorrow (*ghadan*), [i.e., on the Day of Judgement,] they will be given the priority, and they are the people who will give special praise [to God] on the Place of Standing [on the Day of Judgement] in the forefront of the rows of saints. They are the chosen of the chosen. God chose them on the way of prophets, and they proceeded to Him through attraction, they did not proceed with their own will. God drew their hearts on their way. He took them on their way Himself, and placed them between prophets and saints. Therefore, they are so close as to be at a hearing's distance from prophets, while saints are behind them. They are greatest in respect of attentiveness and awakefulness, and they have more insight into the way of prophets, because they [themselves] proceeded on that way as the chosen ones. They are the *munfaridūn*, whose hearts are immersed in the unity of God (*waḥdānīya*), and who walked away from worldly things. They are the *muḥaddathūn*.⁸⁹

According to Tirmidhī, the messengers, the prophets, and the *muḥaddathūn* belong to the same category of the *mursalūn* (the God-sent.) He seems to have gotten a hint for the above idea from Ibn 'Abbās's reading of the Qur'anic verse (22/52), "We have never sent any messenger nor any prophet before you but that Satan interferred with his desire even while he desired some thing." Ibn 'Abbās transmitted a variant reading which inserts "nor any *muḥaddath*" after "nor any

⁸⁹ *al-Kalām 'alā Ma'nā*, pp. 25-27.

prophet."⁹⁰ Both saints and prophets are not sent *to the creatures* with a particular law; still they are sent by God.

Everyone whose affair God (Himself) administers (*waliya*,) everyone whom God commissions (*istana'a*) and singles out is a "sent one" (*mursal*) and a "dispatched one" (*mab'uth*.) Don't you see what God mentioned concerning the enemies of the Israelites whom He prepared as a punishment for His servants? He said, "Then We sent against you our servants of mighty powers." Although this is a dispatch (*ba'th*) for the evil and punishment, they [*i.e.*, *muḥaddathūn*] are dispatched for the good and help (*ghiyāth*).⁹¹

Tirmidhī repeatedly emphasizes that prophethood consists of some certain number of parts, some of which are possessed by the saints as well. The idea of prophethood consisting of parts is taken from the following two *ḥadīths*: "veridical vision (*ru'yā*) of the believer is one of the forty-six parts of prophethood"⁹² and "moderation (*iqtiṣād*,) good manner (*samt ḥasan*,) and right guidance (*hudā ṣāliḥ*) are among twenty-three parts of prophethood."⁹³ The first *ḥadīth* is often supported by two other *ḥadīths*. Concerning the Qur'anic verse, "the friends of God do not have fear nor sorrow . . . they have the good tidings (*bushrā*) in the life of this world and hereafter," the Prophet, according to the *ḥadīth*, explained "the good tidings" as the veridical vision (*ru'yā ṣāliḥa*) which the servant or

⁹⁰*Khatm*, pp. 352-353. This variant is also quoted in *al-Kalām 'alā Ma'nā*, p. 29. This reading of Ibn 'Abbās appears in Abū Bakr 'Abdullāh b. Abī Dā'ūd Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Maṣāhif*, ed. Arthur Jeffery in his *Materials for the History of the Texts of the Qur'an* (Leiden, 1937), p. 75.

⁹¹*Khatm*, p. 352.

⁹²Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-Uṣūl fī Ma'rifat Aḥādīth al-Rasūl* (Beirut, 1972), p. 118. *Ma'rifat al-Asrār*, p. 67, cf. Baraka, p. 148; Marquet, *Tirmidhī*, p. 67.

⁹³*Khatm*, p. 347. See the note of Osman Yahya on the same page for the sources of this *ḥadīth*. The *ḥadīth* is quoted also in the *Ma'rifat al-Asrār*, p. 67.

God sees or which appears to him.⁹⁴ And in the other *ḥadīth* he explains the vision of the believer as the speech (*kalām*) which the Lord utters to His servant in his dream.⁹⁵

In the *Asrār al-Maʿrifa*, Tirmidhī in fact enumerates all the forty-six parts of prophethood. According to this list, *ḥadīth* is the noblest part of prophethood, then follows *ṣiddiqīya*, *ilhām*, and *firāsa*.⁹⁶

As can be seen from the discussion above, *ḥadīth* is the greatest part of prophethood. In the *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*, Tirmidhī writes as follows:

When the intellects (*ʿuqūl*) of the *muḥaddathūn* become pure and their hearts clean, unblemished by sins, desires, and worldly attachments (*ʿalāʾiq*), they are spoken to (*kullimū*) upon their hearts. Since the speech (*kalām*) upon spirits (*arwāḥ*) while asleep is one of the forty-six parts of prophethood, speech upon hearts while awake is more than one-third of prophethood, [varying] in accordance with their proximity to their Lord in their sittings (*majālis*).⁹⁷

Thus, *muḥaddathūn* who possess *ḥadīth* possess one-third or even more of prophethood, according to their varying degree.

For the *muḥaddathūn* there are [different] stations (*manāzil*.) Some of them are given one-third of prophethood, some a half of it, and some even more.⁹⁸

Then what is *ḥadīth*, and how is it different from the prophetic revelation and the inspiration of the saint? As is seen in the above quotation from the *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*, it is the speech of God falling upon the heart while awake. The term *muḥaddathūn* is, of course, taken

⁹⁴*Khatm*, pp. 372-73.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 373.

⁹⁶*Maʿrifat al-Asrār*, p. 68.

⁹⁷*Nawādir al-Uṣūl*, pp. 118-19. cf. Baraka, p. 155.

⁹⁸*Khatm*, p. 347.

from the famous *ḥadīth* concerning 'Umar. In the *ḥadīth*, the Prophet says: "there were in the [previous communities] *muḥaddathūn*; if there is [such] in my community, it is 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb." Another variant of this *ḥadīth* shows the meaning of *muḥaddathūn* more clearly. It runs as follows: "there were in the [previous] communities people who were spoken to [by God] besides the prophets; if there is such a one in my community, it is 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb."⁹⁹

Although usually *ḥadīth* scholars interpret the term *muḥaddathūn* in the above *ḥadīth* as those who receive inspiration (*ilhām*),¹⁰⁰ Tirmidhī distinguishes *ilhām* and *ḥadīth*. In a rather obscure passage of the *Asrār al-Ma'rifa*, he says:

The beginning of *ḥadīth* is *ilhām* a new (*ṭarīy*) *ḥadīth* comes from God to His saint without the witness of the angels from one to one. The action of *ḥadīth* is the presence (*ḥuḍūr*) of the heart . . . *Ḥadīth* is [a part] of prophethood, just as audition (*sam'c*) is one of the aspects of the heirs of prophethood.¹⁰¹

Also in the *Taḥṣīl Naḡā'ir al-Qur'ān*, Tirmidhī distinguishes messengership, prophethood, *ḥadīth* and *ilhām* in the following manner:

The revelation (*waḥy*) which His speech (*kalām*) warrants (*ḍamīna*) is messengerhood; the revelation which prophethood warrants is prophethood; the revelation which His knowledge (*'ilm*) warrants is *ḥadīth*; the revelation which wisdom (*ḥikma*) warrants is *ilhām*.¹⁰²

Although it is very clear that *ḥadīth* which only those chosen by God can receive is higher than *ilhām* unfortunately it is not very clear how they are different and where the difference lies. For instance, in the

⁹⁹Both *ḥadīths* are quoted in the *Khatm*, pp. 356-57.

¹⁰⁰E.g., see the gloss on *muḥaddathūn* in Muḥammad b. 'Abdullah al-Khatīb al-Tabrizī, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī. 3 vols. (Cairo, 1979), 3:1704.

¹⁰¹*Ma'rifat al-Asrār*, p. 68.

¹⁰²Tirmidhī, *Taḥṣīl Naḡā'ir al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ḥusnī Naṣr Zay-dān (Cairo, 1970), p. 148, cf. Baraka, p. 155.

following passage in which the manner of the revelation for the saint is described, *ilhām* and *firāsa* appear together with *sakīna* which distinguishes *ḥadīth*.

The good tidings (*bushrā*) [i.e., the verdical vision] comes to his [believer's] heart while awake. Indeed, the heart is the treasury of God. His spirit (*rūh*) leaves (his body) to God in his sleep, and prostrates itself to Him below the Throne. On the other hand, his heart goes to Him beyond the Throne inside the Veils, beholds the sittings (*majālis*,) converses [with Him] intimately (*yunājī*,) and is given the good tidings. And in it are his *tawḥīd*, his *ilhām*, his *firāsa*, and his *sakīna*.¹⁰³

On the other hand, the difference between *ḥadīth* and the prophetic revelation (*waḥy*) is discussed at great length. However, it must be noted that sometimes the term *waḥy* is used generically for all forms of revelation as in the passage quoted above from the *Taḥṣīl Naḥā'ir al-Qur'ān*. Also the term *muḥaddath* is sometimes used generically for every receiver of the revelation, as in the following passage from the *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*:

The *muḥaddath* is of three kinds: the *muḥaddath* with *waḥy*, which is that which goes down (*yakhfiq*) upon the heart through the Spirit; *muḥaddath* in sleep is concerned with spirits which, when they go out from the body, they are spoken to; *muḥaddath* while awake upon the heart with the *sakīna*, and they comprehend it (*yaqilūhu*) and know it.¹⁰⁴

In the above quotation, the first type of *muḥaddath* corresponds to the prophet, because Tirmidhī repeatedly states that the prophet receives *waḥy* through the spirit, while the *muḥaddath* receives *ḥadīth* with the *sakīna*.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Khatm*, p. 373.

¹⁰⁴ *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁵ *Sakīna* in this context seems to be taken from the *ḥadīth* of 'Alī concerning 'Umar, who is the *muḥaddath*; "We do not think it unlikely that *sakīna* speaks upon the tongue of 'Umar" (*sakīna tanṭuq 'alā līsān 'Umar*.) (Tabrizī, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, 3:1704.) Goldzieher thinks that *sakīna* is used with the meaning "Holy Ghost" in the above *ḥadīth*. (Goldzieher, "Über den Ausdruck *sakīna*," in

The difference between prophethood and sainthood (here the *muḥaddathun*) is explained in the *Khatm al-Awliyā'* in the following way:

Prophethood is the speech (*kalām*) which comes (*yanfaṣil*) from God as revelation (*waḥy*,) together with a spirit (*rūḥ*) from God, so that the revelation is decreed (*yuqṭadā*) and sealed with the spirit. And through it [i.e., spirit,] it [i.e., the revelation] is accepted. This is what necessitates the belief (*taṣdīq*) in it. Those who deny it become infidels, because they deny the speech of God. On the other hand, sainthood is for those to whom God entrusted (*waliya*) His *ḥadīth*. He [God] carries him [the saint] to Himself in a different way, and he has the *ḥadīth*. This *ḥadīth* comes (*yanfaṣil*) from God on the tongue of the Truth (*ʿalā lisān al-Ḥaqq*,) together with the *sakīna*. The *sakīna* which is in the heart of the *muḥaddath* receives it [i.e., *ḥadīth*,] accepts it, and has peace of mind in it (*yaskun ilayhi*).¹⁰⁶

Then he further explains the difference between *ḥadīth* and *kalām* in the following way:

Ḥadīth is what appears from His knowledge when He wills it. This is the *ḥadīth* of the soul, like a secret. This *ḥadīth* happens only from God's Love toward this servant of His. It progresses, together with truth, to his heart, and the heart receives it through *sakīna*, and whoever denies this does not become an unbeliever, rather he is frustrated, and evil consequences befall him, and his heart falters, because this man denies the truth brought by God's Love from God's knowledge of Himself. For He entrusted him with the truth, and made it a buttress for his heart. Whereas the former [he who denies the prophet] denies God's word (*kalām*) and revelation (*waḥy*) and spirit (*rūḥ*) to His face.¹⁰⁷

Although prophethood and sainthood, that is, *waḥy* and *ḥadīth* are well distinguished terminologically, still one wonders whether the distinction is really anything more than the difference of terminology.

Just as prophethood is from God, so is the *ḥadīth* from God according to the aspects which I mentioned to you. And just as prophethood is guarded (*mahrūsa*) by the revelation and the spirit, so is the *ḥadīth* guarded by the Truth and the *sakīna*. The revelation brings prophethood, and the spirit is

Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie (Leiden, 1896), p. 196.

¹⁰⁶*Khatm*, pp. 346-47.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p. 347.

its partner (*qarīn.*) The truth brings the *ḥadīth*, and the *sakīna* is the premise (*muqaddama*) of prophethood, and the *ḥadīth* is in the heart of the prophet and the *muḥaddath* is fixed (*thābit.*)¹⁰⁸

Both the prophet and the *muḥaddath* are divinely guarded by God from any mistakes, and the revelation and *ḥadīth* are infallible.¹⁰⁹ Although it is very clear that prophethood is higher than *ḥadīth*, still we do not know exactly in which points the former is superior.

Tirmidhī also distinguishes the messenger from the prophet and the saint (*muḥaddath.*) Messengership is most clearly defined, because here Tirmidhī follows the concept of messengership generally accepted in Islam. The messenger is the one who is given by God the message (*risāla,*) that is, the Law (*sharīʿa.*)

The messenger is the one who prophesies (*yatanabba'*) and is sent to the people whom he informs (*yukhbir,*) and to whom he brings the message (*risāla.*) The prophet is the one who prophesies, but he is not sent to anyone. When he is asked, he informs them, and meanwhile he calls the people to God, exhorts them, and shows them the way in the Law of the messenger. The messenger possesses the Law, which he brought from God, and he calls the people to that Law. The prophet is the one who is not sent [to anyone,] He follows the Law of that messenger, and calls the people to that Law which the messenger brought, shows it to them. Also the *muḥaddath* does in the same manner; he calls the people to God on the basis of the way of that Law, and shows them the way to it . . . God took a covenant (*mīthāq*) from every one of them [i.e., the messenger, the prophet, and the *muḥaddath,*] each separately; the covenant of the messenger with his messengership; the covenant of the prophet with his prophethood; the covenant of the *muḥaddath* with his sainthood (*walāya.*) All of them call the people to God. However, the messenger is decreed the fulfilment (*adā'*) of messengership with the Law; the prophet is decreed information (*khābar*) about God. Those who disapprove of them are infidels. The *muḥaddath* has the *ḥadīth* with the confirmation (*ta'yīd*) and the additional clear proof (*ziyāda bayyīna*) in the Law of the prophet . . . Whoever disapproves of him fails for lack of His blessing (*baraka*) and His light.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p. 349.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, p. 350-59.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 352-53.

Both the prophet and the *muḥaddath* follow the Law of the messenger. Therefore, the *ḥadīth* which the *muḥaddath* receives from God is never contradictory to the Law, but always agrees with the Law and confirms it. If it contradicts the Law, it is not *ḥadīth*, but insinuation (*waswās*) which comes from the Devil. Since the *muḥaddath* is divinely guarded from the devil, such a man who contradicts the Law cannot be a *muḥaddath*.

What comes to him [i.e., the *muḥaddath*] upon the tongue of the Truth in God is good tidings, confirmation (*ta'yīd*,) and exhortation (*maw'iza*.) It does not abrogate anything of the Law, rather it is in agreement with the Law. What contradicts the Law is devilish insinuation (*waswās*.)¹¹¹

As we have seen above, Tirmidhī always clearly places messengers and prophets in front of saints. Although there are degrees among the prophets, even the highest saint cannot reach the rank of the lowest prophet. Nevertheless, he is often accused of positing the supremacy of saints over prophets by contemporaries and later scholars. As Geyoushi, Baraka, and Radtke all pointed out,¹¹² the accusation is unfounded in his extant writings. However, as we have seen above, there is also no apparently qualitative difference between *ḥadīth* and prophethood beyond the sophisticated terminology. In other words, they are not different in kind. At least, the content of these two types of revelation is not analyzed carefully and in any detail. Curiously, prophethood is very often analyzed quantitatively. We can even say that *muḥaddathūn* are less of prophets, and prophets more of saints. Also it is interesting to note that Tirmidhī never explicitly states that every prophet,

¹¹¹*Ibid.*

¹¹²Geyoushi, "Saints and Sainthood," pp. 21-27; Radtke, p. 92; Baraka, 2:367-369.

every messenger is at the same time a saint. However, this should be the logical conclusion of his following statement:

The *muḥaddath* has *ḥadīth*, *firāsa*, *ilhām*, and *ṣiddīqiya*. The prophet, in addition to all the above, has prophethood (*tanabbu'*.) The messenger has, in addition to all the above, messengership. The saints below them have *firāsa*, *ilhām*, and *ṣiddīqiya*.¹¹³

In one place, Tirmidhī seems to suggest that the saints are nearer to God than the prophets, quoting the *ḥadīth*, "God has servants (*ʿibād*) who are neither prophets nor martyrs, but whom both prophets and martyrs envy, because of their place (*makān*) and their proximity to God . . . " However, Tirmidhī is asked whether this *ḥadīth* does not show the superiority of saints over prophets, he emphatically denies it, saying, "there is absolutely no one who is superior to the prophets by virtue of their prophethood and their position (*maḥall*)." When he is further asked why the prophets envy them, if they are not superior to them, he answers as follows: "He (Muḥammad) has explained it already in the *ḥadīth*; it is because of their proximity and their place (*makān*) in relation to God."¹¹⁴ Here, although the superiority of the prophets over the saints is explicitly affirmed, still it is suggested that saints are nearer to God than prophets. However, this fact is never emphasized. In this connection, it is worthy to note that Tirmidhī never mentions that the messenger is given the Law through the intermediacy of angels, while he emphasizes many times that the saint has intimate conversations with God face to face. nor does he refer to the story of Khadir and Moses to prove the supremacy of saintly gnosis over prophetic knowledge.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 357-58.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

In one passage in the *Khatm al-Awliyā'*, he describes the station (*maqām*) and the lot (*ḥaẓẓ*) of the Messenger in the following way.

The station of the Messenger is in the Kingdom of the Kingdom in front of Him; and his lot of it is His *waḥdānīya*.¹¹⁵

We have already seen that both "the Kingdom of the Kingdom in front of Him" and *waḥdānīya* are attributed to the saint also. However, Tirmidhī is not comparing here the messenger with the saint. Therefore it is not his intention to equate the messenger with the saint. We can explain his inconsistency in the following manner. When he describes the saint, the prophet, and the messenger separately, he tends to extol each of them with the highest laudatory expressions. Thus their descriptions sometimes coincide. However, when he compares them consciously, he is careful to distinguish them, using different terms for each of them, and to place the messenger in the highest rank, then the prophet, and then the saint.

Next, I would like to discuss briefly Tirmidhī's concept of the seal of the saints (*khatm al-awliyā'*).¹¹⁶ This concept invented by him has exercised a profound and enduring influence upon later Sufism. We have already pointed out the characteristic parallelism between prophethood and sainthood in Tirmidhī's thought. It is this parallelism which led him to invent the concept of the "seal of the saints" as counterpart to the seal of the prophets. The parallelism between the seal of the prophets and the seal of the saints is worked out very carefully and in detail. The seal of the saints will appear physically at the Last Judgement as the last saint, just as Muḥammad appeared the last among the prophets. In this sense, he is identical with the Mahdi. However,

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 441.

¹¹⁶Marquet, *Tirmidhī*, pp. 73-77.

the seal of the saints as the idea in the mind of God is the first of the saints in His divine plan, just as Muḥammad is the first of the prophets. This interesting doctrine of the pre-existence of Muḥammad is expressed in terms of vague, liturgical encomium rather than in terms of the metaphysical doctrine of later Sufism and the cosmological myth of Shi'ism. And the pre-existence of the seal of the saints is conceived as exactly parallel to that of Muḥammad.

For God was, when nothing was, and then came his [creative] Word, and Knowledge appeared, and Will. The first creative Word was Muḥammad's; of Knowledge first appeared his knowledge; of Will, his will. In destinies assigned, his was the first; on the Well-Preserved Tablet he was the first, and in the covenant he was the first.¹¹⁷

The seal of the saints is described in the following way:

This saint [i.e., the seal of the saints] never ceases to be mentioned from the beginning. He is the first in the creative Word, the first in Knowledge, then the first in Will. He is the first in the destinies assigned, the first in the Well-Preserved Tablet, the first in the covenant.¹¹⁸

They are also both first on the Day of Resurrection. The following is the description of Muḥammad on that Day:

He is the first on the Day when the earth is split apart. He is the first to speak (*khitāb*,) the first to arrive (*wifāda*,) the first to intercede, the first to come near (*jiwār*,) the first to enter Heaven (*dukhūl al-dār*,) the first to visit (*ziyāra*,) So he leads the prophets. He is the Sealer of prophethood, he is the proof of God to His creation on the Day of Standing (*yawm al-mawqif*,) No other prophet can attain this [position].¹¹⁹

Exactly identical expressions are used for the seal of the saints.

He is the first to gather (*maḥshar*) [on the Day of Resurrection], the first to speak, the first to arrive, the first to intercede, the first to come near, the first to enter the Heaven, the first to visit. He is in every place the first of

¹¹⁷*Khatm*, p. 337.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 345.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 337-338.

the saints just as Muḥammad is the first of the prophets.¹²⁰ On the Day of Resurrection, all the saints are in need of the seal of the saints, because he is the intercessor for them, just as all the prophets are in need of Muḥammad for his intercession. He is the proof of God to all the other saints, and he leads them.

The seal of the saints is described by Tirmidhī with the highest possible attributes and, as has been pointed out before, these descriptions sometimes coincide with other saints (*siddīqūn*, or *muḥaddathūn*) and prophets.

His [i.e., the seal of the saints] is the highest of the stations (*manāzil*) of the saints. He is in the Kingdom of *far-dāniya*, and stands alone (*infarada*) in His *wahdāniya*. His intimate conversation with God (*munājātuhu*) is [held] face to face (*kifāhan*) in the sittings (*majālis*) of the Kingdom.¹²¹

The station (*maqām*) of this servant [i.e., the seal of the saints] is in front of God in the Kingdom of the Kingdom. His intimate conversation with God (*najwāhu*) is here in the Greatest Sitting (*al-majlis al-a'zam*.) He is in the grip of God (*hūwa fī qabdatihi*).¹²²

However, when the seal of the saints is compared with other saints and the prophets, he is placed carefully between these two: the prophets are in front of him, and the saints are behind him. After Tirmidhī declares that the gifts (*hadāyā*) which the seal of the saints receives come from the treasuries (*khazā'in*) of endeavor (*sa'y*), he explains this term as follows:

There are three types of treasuries: those of graces (*minan*) for the saints; those of endeavor for the leader (*al-imām al-qā'id*); and those of the proximity (*qurb*) for the prophets. The station (*maqām*) of this man is beyond (*min*) the treasuries of graces, and next to (*mutanāwal min*) the treasuries of the proximity. He is always in endeavor. Thus his rank (*mar-*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 345.

taba) is in that place; however, he has access to the treasures of the prophets and the cover (*ghitā'*) has been uncovered for him from the station and ranks of the prophets and their gifts (*ʿaṭāyā*) and presents (*tuḥaf.*)¹²³

Thus he can be said to be almost like the prophets, although he is not equal to them. However, sometimes Tirmidhī places the seal of the saints immediately after Muḥammad. He is "near the ear" of Muḥammad (*hūwa min Muḥammad . . . ʿinda al-udhuni,*) while the saints are at the back of his head (*ʿinda al-qafā.*)¹²⁴ God brings him on the way of Muḥammad with his prophethood, and gives him the seal for his approaching the source of Muḥammad on the Day of Standing.¹²⁵

Continuity of Sainthood

According to Tirmidhī, saints continue to appear in the dark ages of troubles after the death of Muḥammad and his companions. He declares that the reign of goodness (*dawlat al-khayr*) and the reign of evil (*dawlat al-sharr*) alternate, based on the *ḥadīth*, "there comes upon you no [favorable] age (*zamān*) except that after it comes the evil from it," and considers his time the reign of evil.¹²⁶ How are the *walāya* and the *ṣiddīqīya* possible in this dark age? His answer is as follows: the *walāya* and the *ṣiddīqīya* are not related to time at all; the saint and the *ṣiddīq* are the proof of God upon His creation, the succor (*ghiyāth*) of the creation and their protection (*amān,*) because they are the callers to God upon clear proof.¹²⁷

¹²³*Ibid.*, pp. 367-68.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 345.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 422.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 429.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 430.

In one place, he affirms the continuous existence of the saints after Muḥammad in more concrete terms:

Now when God took His prophet, He made in his community forty *ṣiddīqūn*, through whom the earth stands still. They are "the people of his House" (*āl baytihi*.) Whenever one of them dies, God appoints another who takes his place.¹²⁸

It continues like that, until at the end of the world He sends the seal of the saints.

God sent the messengers in the time of slackness (*fatra*), blindness, and the reign of falsehood, so that the truth be revived and falsehood be destroyed. What prevents you from thinking that there will be a man at the end of time who is equal to the first of them, because of people's need of them at the end of time?¹²⁹

This supposition of Tirmidhī encounters the difficulty that, after Muḥammad, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar are considered the greatest saints. Therefore, it is asked of him whether it is possible that there are those who are equal to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar in his time. Tirmidhī answers this question by distinguishing between "acts" (*aʿmāl*) and ranks (*darajāt*.) It is impossible for the later saints to be equal to them in respect to actions, but possible in respect of ranks.

Who stingily denies the mercy of God to the people, our time, so that there can be no *sābiq*, no *muqarrab*, no *muḥtabā* among our people? Will the *mahdī* not appear at the end of the world, rising with justice at the time of slackness? There is no impossibility in that.¹³⁰

Certainly, God does not consign people to desperation by limiting His mercy only to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Thus, Tirmidhī affirms the continuous existence of the saints until the end of the world.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 344.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 430.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 436.

Lastly I would like to bring a few additional points in Tirmidhī's theory of sainthood which show similarities to that of Ibn 'Arabī. For Tirmidhī, the knowledge which the saints possess is the clearest sign of their sainthood. It is the knowledge of the beginning (*bad'*,) covenant (*mīthāq*,) decrees (*maqādīr*,) letters (*ḥurūf*.)¹³¹ And he constantly criticizes the jurists (*fuqahā'*,) whose science does not teach anything on these matters. They even betray the spirit of the Law by employing various ruses (*ḥiyal*) to please the rulers.¹³² Sometimes he calls the jurists "the knowers of the command of God" (*'ulamā' amr Allāh*) in contrast with the saints, "the knowers of God."¹³³

The saint's constant changing of states (*aḥwāl*) and God's self-manifestation (*tajallī*, or *zuhūr*) to the hearts of the saints, two characteristic doctrines of Ibn 'Arabī, are not lacking in Tirmidhī. It is said that the saints worship God by constantly changing their states,¹³⁴ and the seal of the saints transforms himself (*yataqallab*) in his state of contraction (*qabḍa*.)¹³⁵ The soul of the saint is annihilated by the self-manifestation of God (*tajallī*) which comes down upon it, then their heart lives only through the Lord.¹³⁶ However, as compared to Ibn 'Arabī, Tirmidhī's references to these are brief and isolated, and are not developed into a metaphysical doctrine.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, p. 362.

¹³²Tirmidhī, *al-Masā'il al-Makunūna*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Jayūshī (Cairo, 1980), pp. 46-48.

¹³³*al-Kalām 'ala Ma'nā*, pp. 30-32.

¹³⁴*Ma'rifat al-Asrār*, p. 56.

¹³⁵*Nawādir al-Uṣūl*, p. 140.

¹³⁶Radtke, pp. 67, 118.

Prophethood and Sainthood in Ghazzālī's Kīmīyā-yi Sa'ādat

Ibn 'Arabī mentions Ghazzālī's *Kīmīyā' al-Sa'āda* in his exposition of the theory of sainthood, and thinks that Ghazzālī claims in this book that prophethood can be acquired, as distinct from being conferred by God.¹³⁷ Therefore it is necessary to examine the theory of prophethood and sainthood expounded in this book.

The well-known *Kīmīyā-yi Sa'ādat* is a Persian summary of the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. However, there is a much smaller book of the same title in Arabic.¹³⁸ This Arabic work corresponds roughly to the first chapter of the Introduction (*'unwān awwal*) of the Persian version (pp. 9-38.) Probably Ibn 'Arabī read this Arabic version. However, sometimes the authenticity of the Arabic version is doubted, while the authenticity of the Persian version is never questioned.¹³⁹

In the Arabic version, the problem of prophets and saints is discussed on pp. 15-18, which correspond to pp. 22-25 of the Persian version, although the Arabic version is much abridged.

In this part, Ghazzālī deals with the "mystical knowledge" (*'ilm ladunnī*,) which the heart receives directly from the invisible world through the inner window (*rawzan-i dil*.)¹⁴⁰ For the common man, this window is open only during sleep and after death. However, one can sometimes receive this kind of knowledge as *firāsa* (insight) and

¹³⁷See *infra*, p. 163, and also in the *Futūḥāt*, 2:3.

¹³⁸Ghazzālī, *Kīmīyā' al-Sa'āda* (Cairo, A. H. 1343). Henceforth the work is quoted as Arabic *Kīmīyā'*, while the Persian version is quoted as *Kīmīyā*.

¹³⁹Watt, "Authenticity," pp. 35-36; Maurice Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie de Al-Ghazālī (Algazel)*, ed. Michel Allard (Beirut, 1959), pp. 136-37; Badawi, *Mu'allafāt*, pp. 275-76.

¹⁴⁰*Kīmīyā*, p. 23; Arabic *Kīmīyā'*, p. 16. The expression, "the window of the heart" does not appear in the latter.

khāṭir (inspiration,) in the same manner as saints receive *ilhām*.¹⁴¹

The window can be also opened while one is awake, if one purifies his heart from anger, desires and bad habits through spiritual combat (*jihād*) and exercises (*riyāḍa*.) Then one can see in waking what others see in sleep. And Ghazzālī quotes the words of Muhammad, "The earth became contracted for me, and I saw the farthest east and the farthest west." Prophets acquire knowledge in this way, and so do sufis in our time.¹⁴² And Ghazzālī contrasts this type of knowledge with that of *'ulamā'*.

However, the ability to receive such mystical knowledge is not limited to prophets and saints, because it is inherent to the essence of man.¹⁴³ This belongs to the innate human nature (*fiṭra*), therefore whoever purifies his heart can attain this degree (*daraja*.) Then Ghazzālī goes on to say that prophets and saints are also human beings, and quotes the Qur'anic verse, "Say, 'I am a man like you'" (18/110.)¹⁴⁴

The discussion on prophetic knowledge in the Arabic version ends here, while in the Persian version, it continues, and Ghazzālī discusses the difference between the prophet and the saint in the following manner:

When the way is open to a man, and what is good (*ṣalāḥ*) for all creatures is shown to him, and he calls¹⁴⁵ [people] to

¹⁴¹*Kīmīyā*, p. 23; Arabic *Kīmīyā'*, p. 15. However, the word *firāsa* does not appear in the latter.

¹⁴²Arabic *Kīmīyā'*, p. 16. In the *Kīmīyā* (p. 24) it is said: "The way of sufis is this, and this is the way of prophethood." (*rāh-i šūfiyān īn ast, wa īn rāh-i nubūwat ast.*)

¹⁴³Arabic *Kīmīyā'*, p. 17; *Kīmīyā*, p. 24. In the latter, the word "saints" does not appear.

¹⁴⁴Arabic *Kīmīyā*, p. 17; *Kīmīyā*, p. 25. In the latter, the word "saints" does not appear.

¹⁴⁵I read *da'wat konad* instead of *da'wat konand* in the text. The

that [good] which is shown to him, then that [i.e., what is shown to him] is called "the sacred Law" (*sharī'at*), and he is called "prophet" (*payambar*) and his condition (*hālat*) is called "prophetic miracle" (*mu'jiza*). When one is not occupied with the calling of people, he is called "saint" (*walī*), and his conditions are called "miracles" (*karāmāt*).¹⁴⁶

In the Persian version of the *Kīmīyā*, there is an extra section (*faṣl*) which is entitled "The Reality of Prophethood and Sainthood."¹⁴⁷ Here, Ghazzālī first declares that both prophethood and sainthood are among the ranks (*darajāt*) of nobleness of man's heart. They have these three characteristics.

1. What is disclosed in a dream for the common people is revealed to the prophet and the saint while awake.
2. While the soul of the common people only affects their own body, the soul of the prophet and the saint affects bodies outside their own in a manner beneficial to the creature (i.e., they can work miracles.)
3. While the common people obtain knowledge through instruction, the prophet and the saint obtain it without education from their inner self through the purification of their soul. Such knowledge is called "mystical knowledge" (*ʿilm ladunnī*).

Whoever unites all the above three qualities is one of the prophets or the saints. There are different ranks among them: some possess only one of the three qualities; some possess a little of all the three. The one who possesses the three qualities to the most perfect degree is the Prophet Muḥammad. The common people are given samples for all these

following two editions of *Kīmīyā* also have the reading of *konad*. *Kīmīyā-yi Saʿādat*, ed. Ḥusayn Khadīve-Jam (Teheran, 1976), p. 32; and *Kīmīyā-yi Saʿādat* (Bombay, n.d.), p. 15.

¹⁴⁶ *Kīmīyā*, p. 25.

¹⁴⁷ *Kīmīyā*, pp. 27-29.

qualities, so that they can understand what prophethood is like, and follow the Prophet, and learn from him. These samples are dream, *firāsa*, and *khāṭir*.

Ghazzālī does not deny the possibility that there exist some other qualities among prophets and saints which do not correspond to those found in the common people. But these qualities are, even if they exist, unknowable by definition. In this sense, it can be said that God can be only known by God, the prophet by the prophet and those higher than the prophet, the saint by the saint and those higher than the saint.

Except for the reservations of agnosticism characteristic of Ghazzālī, he considers prophethood and sainthood the highest capacity of the heart. Although everyone is endowed with a part of this capacity, it is more developed in the prophet and the saint, and it is most perfectly realized in the Prophet Muḥammad.¹⁴⁸

The "mystic knowledge" of sufi saints and the knowledge of prophets have a common source, although the latter is concerned with the well-being (*ṣalāḥ*) of the whole creatures, that is, the sacred Law, and they call people to it. Ghazzālī does not state explicitly that prophethood can be acquired, nor does he deny this possibility categorically.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸Ghazzālī's theory of prophethood in the *Kīmīyā* is strongly influenced by that of Ibn Sīnā. For the latter's theory, see M. E. Marmura, "Avicenna's psychological proof of prophecy," *JNES* 22 (1963):49-56; *idem*, "Avicenna's theory of prophecy in the light of Ash'arite theology," in *Seed of Wisdom, Essays in Honour of T. J. Meek* (Toronto, 1964), pp. 159-178.

¹⁴⁹Ghazzālī writes: "It is not necessary for everyone to whom this condition is manifested to be occupied with the calling of people; rather God can decide that he be not occupied with the calling, either because the sacred Law is still new and there is no need of another calling, or because the calling requires another quality which does not exist in a saint." (*Kīmīyā*, p. 25.)

Before comparing Ibn 'Arabī's theory of sainthood to that of Tirmidhī and Ghazzālī discussed above, it will be helpful for an understanding of the position of Ibn 'Arabī if we first examine his early treatise on sainthood and prophethood, in which Tirmidhī's influences can be seen most clearly.

Ibn 'Arabī's Early Theory in the Treatise on Sainthood and Prophethood

The small treatise on sainthood and prophethood, which was recently edited by Ḥāmid Ṭāhir, was written by Ibn 'Arabī at a relatively early age before his departure to the East.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, by comparing the thought expressed in this treatise to that in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya* and the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, we can trace his development on the subject of sainthood and prophethood.

The leitmotif of this treatise is the daring words of Maḥdawī, "the knowers (*'ulamā'*) of this community are prophets of other communities." The treatise is written for Ibn 'Arabī's cousin, who studies Sufism under Maḥdawī, to explain this enigmatic saying of the shaykh.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Ḥāmid Ṭāhir, "*al-Walāya wa al-Nubūwa 'inda Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī: Taḥqīq wa Dirāsa li-Nass lam yasbiq nashruhu*," *Alif* 5 (1985) :7-38. According to the kind information supplied by Professor Michel Chodkiewicz in personal correspondence (June 16, 1986) this "treatise" is, in reality, a mixture of two different treatises. The first (pp. 19-32) corresponds to no. 625 and no. 632 in Osman Yahya's inventory of Ibn 'Arabī's writings. (Osman Yahya, *Histoire et Classification de l'Oeuvre d'Ibn 'Arabī*, 2 vols. [Damascus, 1964], 2:442,444.) Cf. Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints*, p. 66. The second (pp. 32-36) belongs to the *Kitāb Mashāhid al-Asrār al-Qudsīya*, which is no. 432 in Osman Yahya's inventory. (Osman Yahya, *Histoire et Classification*, 2:370-72.) Only the first treatise is concerned specifically with the doctrine of prophethood and sainthood. This epistle without title was written in A. H. 590 after Ibn 'Arabī's visit to Shaykh Maḥdawī in Tunis.

¹⁵¹ For Shaykh Maḥdawī and Ibn 'Arabī's cousin, see Ḥāmid Ṭāhir's footnotes 1 and 2 in "*al-Walāya wa al-Nubūwa*," p. 36.

At the beginning of the treatise, he affirms that there are continuous revelations from God. Although the expressions (*ʿibārāt*) used in them are different, they are essentially various aspects of one Truth.

Have you not seen the *Tūrā*, the *Injīl*, and other revealed Books? Just as one book of them was not enough, so God [continues] to inspire (*alḥama*) the saints. Maybe God reveals (*yaftaḥ*) to one person something other than what is revealed to another person. Rather this is the only conceivable explanation. However, some revelations (*futūḥ*) are more perfect than others. If this were not the case, and if everyone of those who proceed along the way of God and arrive at the Truth itself (*ʿayn al-ḥaqīqa*) had a revelation (*fath*) which is specially his and impossible to attain for others, then people would not understand each other, and any ignorant one could stand up and utter nonsensical words and claim them to be inspiration from God which cannot be denied, since there is no proof (*burhān*) for intuitive knowledge (*dhawq*), nor is there any evidence (*dalīl*) for revelation.¹⁵²

Of course, here Ibn ʿArabī is not demanding logical proof for revealed knowledge, rather he is asserting that there is no real disagreement among the saints, but only a difference of degrees of knowledge attained and in manners of expression. Those to whom only a partial knowledge is revealed may disagree with those who attain the higher knowledge. But the possessors of the highest knowledge understand each other and also understand those who are below them, and thus there is no disagreement among them.

Then Ibn ʿArabī raises the fundamental question as to the possibility of revelation after Muḥammad, and answers in the following manner.

Even if Gabriel ceases to come, inspiration (*ilḥām*) does not cease to come upon the breasts of the saints. Yes! God inspires His saints with His secrets and informs the heaven of their hearts with the suns and the moons of his knowledge. The knowledge gushing forth from Him (*mawārid*) does not have any limit nor end . . . It is the oceans which do not have shores . . .¹⁵³

¹⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

Then he quotes the *ḥadīth*, "the knowers (*ʿulamā'*) are the heirs of the prophets," and explains it in the following manner.

Only the one who is closest to a person in terms of kinship (*raḥīman*) and affinity (*nasaban*) becomes his heir. Since the knowers were the closest to the prophets in terms of affinity, they became heirs to the prophets in respect of "condition" (*ḥāl*,) "action" (*fiʿl*,) "saying" (*qawl*,) and "knowledge" (*ʿilm*,) both outwardly (*zāhiran*) and inwardly (*bāṭinan*.) The heirs of the prophets have highest honor and elevation in high ranks . . .¹⁵⁴

After this introduction, he starts to interpret the saying of Mahdawī, "the knowers of this community are prophets of other communities."

He [Mahdawī] thereby exhorts the people to learn and to be guided and to be led to the straight path; and [he exhorts] the masses to cleave to knowledge (*al-ʿilm*,) lest ignorance prevail over them and they go astray; for if knowledge had departed after the death of the Prophet, people would have gone astray.¹⁵⁵

Ibn ʿArabī classifies the knowledge into three categories: that which is related to this world; to the Next world; and to God. The prophets are those who united all the above categories of knowledge, and so do the knowers who are the heirs of the prophets.

Thus the knowers preserve the total knowledge of the Prophet after his death, because mankind is always in need of his knowledge.

You say: Even if the person of the Prophet (*shakhs al-nabī*) and his vision (*ru'ya*) were lost, his Law and his *sunna* were not lost. Rather, God placed them in the treasuries of the breasts of the knowers who are his heirs. When a seeker knocks at the doors of these treasuries with his question, these doors are opened.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

In this way knowers imitate the prophet and perform the same function as the prophet. However, as followers and imitators of him, they can never reach the degree of prophethood (*daraja al-nubūwa*) as the Prophet himself said, "there is no prophet after me."

The last step the saint takes is the first step the prophet takes; the beginning of the prophets is the end of *ṣiddīqūn* and the saints.¹⁵⁷

The superiority of prophets over saints is explicitly mentioned in this treatise. However, it is always followed by a reservation. "In this there is a subtle secret which cannot be disclosed."¹⁵⁸ Although this mystery is not disclosed in the entire treatise, it must be the equality of sainthood and prophethood in the inner sense. This equality is implicitly suggested through the strange etymological explanation of the meaning of *nabī*. He proposes two possible roots for this term: *nb'* (to inform) and *nbw* (to raise.) In the case of the former root, the form *fa'īl* can have both the meanings of the active participle (*fā'īl*) and the passive participle (*maf'ūl*), i.e., the term *nabī* means "the one who is informed [by God]" and "the one who [in turn] informs people." This meaning can equally apply to the saints, because they are also informed through inspiration (*ilhām*), and they in turn inform the people. However, their information does not concern the renewal or cancellation of the sacred Law, i.e., they are not messengers. It is for this reason that Mahdawī used the term "prophets" (*anbiyā'*) instead of "messengers" (*rusul*) in his saying, "the knowers of this community are prophets of other communities."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

In the case of the second root, it has the meaning of the passive participle, i.e., the term *nabī* means "the one who is raised (by God.)" This meaning also applies to the knowers, because it is said in the Qur'an, "God raises those who believe among you and those who possess knowledge (58/11.)"¹⁶⁰

The active participle, i.e., "the one who informs the people" is more appropriate to the messenger (*mursal*) than to the prophet who is not a messenger and the saint who is his heir (*al-walī al-wārith*), while the passive participle of both roots is more appropriate to the saint and the prophet who is not the messenger. However, there is a difference between the two: God informs the prophet through the intermediacy of the angel, and the saint through direct inspiration. Then Ibn 'Arabī refers to the story of Khādir and Moses, quoting the former's words in the Qur'an: "You will never have any patience with me. How can you show any patience with something that is beyond your experience?" (16/68.) These words of Khādir to Moses clearly show that the station of the prophets and that of the saints are different. However, at this point, Ibn 'Arabī abruptly stops the explanation, saying that here is a secret which will shake the Throne, if it is forcibly divulged.¹⁶¹

Then Ibn 'Arabī asserts the infallibility (*ʿiṣma*) of the saints' knowledge, because they are divinely protected from snares and tricks of the devil. The knowers of this community are also infallible.¹⁶² The first of them are the companions (*ṣaḥāba*) of the Prophet, then the followers (*tābiʿūn*) of the companions, then the followers of the followers and so on. And Ibn 'Arabī mentions Abū Bakr and 'Umar as the

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

foremost examples of the knowers of this community. Especially 'Umar is one of the *muḥaddathūn*, and he refers to a miraculous event in the life of 'Umar. While he was in Medina, he shouted to an expedition marching in Iraq, warning them against the danger near a mountain. And all the soldiers could clearly hear the warning of 'Umar. Strangely enough, Ibn 'Arabī shifts the emphasis from 'Umar to the soldiers in the above event. Their miraculous audition itself is the beginning of mystical knowledge (*mukāshafāt*) for the common people.¹⁶³

Ibn 'Arabī affirms that everyone potentially has the mystical power inside him by means of which he can traverse from the east to the west in a wink, and even burn the world. The sample of this power for the common people is experienced in dreams. While one is in bed, one can see oneself sometimes in the highest place, sometimes in the east, sometimes in the west. However, some people can perceive while awake what other people perceive in a veridical dream. They are the *abdāl* mentioned in the *ḥadīth*, "The earth became contracted for me, and I saw the farthest east and the farthest west of the earth; the *abdāl* of my community will attain [that state in which] the earth contracted for me."¹⁶⁴

Then Ibn 'Arabī divides the knowers (*'ulamā'*) in respect of "arrival (at God)" (*wuṣūl*): those who do not return, and those who return. The latter is further divided into two classes: the particular return (*rujū' khuṣūṣ*) and the general return (*rujū' 'umūm*).¹⁶⁵ The first is called *'ārif*, the second the knower (*'ālim*) who is the heir (*wārith*.)

¹⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.* The first half of this *ḥadīth* is quoted in the similar context by Ghazzālī, *Kīmīyā*, p. 24. See *supra*, p. 152.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 25.

When many think the *ʿārīf* to be higher than the knower, they mean by the knower the possessor of the knowledge of legal judgements (*ṣāḥib ʿilm al-aḥkām*.) However, Ibn ʿArabī supports Maḥdawī's opinion that the *ʿārīf* is between the knower of God and the knower of legal judgements. Then he quotes the famous *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet said, "Prophethood has ceased. There is no messenger nor prophet after me." When this grieved the people, he added, "but there are still good tidings (*mubashshirāt*.)" When he was asked about the meaning of "good tidings," he said, "the vision (*ru'yā*) of the believer is a part of prophethood." Therefore the Sufis can attain a part of prophethood. However, Maḥdawī did not say "the prophets of this community . . . ," rather he said "the knowers of this community . . .", thus conforming with the words of the Prophet, "the knowers are the heirs of the prophets."¹⁶⁶

When Maḥdawī saw the similarity between the Sufis and the prophets who are not messengers, he said, "the knowers of this community are the prophets of other communities." The similarity lies in two aspects: the aspect of "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) and the aspect of "station" (*maqām*.) Therefore, the above words of Maḥdawī should not be interpreted as the total identification of the Sufis and the prophets.

The Arabs compare one thing to another in any one aspect, even if they are different in the rest of the aspects. We say, "Zayd is lion in respect of power; Zayd is Zubayr in respect of poetry." However, the thing which is compared to something is not superior to the power of that thing to which it is compared. When we describe Zayd, we do not compare him with the lion nor with Zubayr, rather we say, "Zayd is fierce, or Zayd is beautiful in respect of poetry," because the similarity occurs only through fierceness and poetry. However, even if we name the one with the name of the other, we are not entirely wrong, but [in that case it must be understood] with

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

the proper context (*qarīna*) and with reservation (*taqyīd.*)¹⁶⁷

In same manner one can say that Sufis are prophets in respect of knowledge, because the similarity lies in knowledge, although the knowledge of Sufis is not equal to that of prophets. Also in the same manner, one can say that the ascetic (*zāhid,*) the pious (*warī'*) the one who trusts in God (*mutawakkil*) are Sufis, because the Sufi is the one who unites all these stations in addition to the "divine uncovering" (*kashf ilāhī,*) "divine mystery" (*sirr rabbānī,*) and "heavenly character" (*takhalluq samā'ī.*) Then Ibn 'Arabī continues as follows:

The relation of the Sufi to the prophet is the same as the relation of the ascetic to the Sufi. The good deeds of the pious are the evil deeds of the *muqarrabūn*. The end of the *ṣiddīqūn* is the beginning of the Sufis; the end of the Sufis is the beginning of the prophets; the end of the prophets is the beginning of the messengers. The end of the messengers is the first attribute of the Divine Presence (*ḥaḍra ilāhīya.*)¹⁶⁸

As for the similarity of the "station," it is said that both the prophets and the knowers follow the messenger, and they live in accordance with their Law. Both Aaron and Joshua are prophets, and still they follow Moses, the messenger.

In the same manner, the knowers of this community [follow the Prophet]; they are the model (*qudwā,*) and they are the trustees (*umanā'*) and vicegerents (*khulafā'*) of the Prophet over his community after him, just like Aaron over the people of Moses.¹⁶⁹

The rest of this treatise does not directly deal with the problem of sainthood and prophethood. However, one of the subjects discussed in the latter part of this treatise is the interpretation of Abū Madyān's saying, "one of the signs of the veracity (*ṣidq*) of 'the aspirant to

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

the Way' (*murīd*) in the beginning of his aspiration is his escape from the creation. One of the signs of his escape from the creation is his presence to God . . ."¹⁷⁰ Ibn 'Arabī explains this saying, taking examples from the life of the Prophet, because the Prophet is the model of the Sufis, and they imitate him. However, their "presence to God" (*wujūd li l-Ḥaqq*) is different from the prophets' presence to God, because the latter is the presence of prophethood. Then Ibn 'Arabī warns the reader not to confuse sainthood with prophethood.

Be careful not to be confused here like those who have been confused by the *Kīmīyā' al-Sa'āda* and say that this shaykh talks about the acquisition (*iktisāb*) of prophethood. God forbid!¹⁷¹

In this way, the unattainability of prophethood is strongly affirmed. However, as is typical of his style, Ibn 'Arabī immediately changes the tone. What is explained above is the explanation of the outward inheritance of prophethood. "As for the inward inheritance, it is not your nest, therefore go away!," because the inward inheritance is only accessible to the chosen ones of God (*murād*), not for those who aspire to God of their own will (*murīd*).¹⁷²

It must be noted that in the above treatise, there is no mention of the distinction between general prophethood and legislative prophethood, which is characteristic of Ibn 'Arabī. And in many points, the theory of sainthood in this treatise is close to that of Tirmidhī. The *waḥy* (revelation) of the prophet and the *ilhām* (inspiration) of the saints are clearly distinguished. Although the prophetic revelation ceased after Muḥammad, inspiration from God acting upon the saints never

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

ceases. The knowledge the saints receive from God is infallible, like the knowledge of the prophets, because the saints are protected by God from error. However, their knowledge is not concerned with the Law, therefore the former never abrogates the latter. The saints are explicitly said to be inferior to the prophets, and the prophets to the messengers, however, saints are similar to prophets in knowledge and station, because both follow the Law of the messengers. The saints can attain a part of prophethood, or rather sainthood is a part of prophethood. The prophet has all the characteristics of the saint in addition to his special characteristics. Besides these essential doctrines, Ibn 'Arabī also uses the terminology used by Tirmidhī and quotes the *ḥadīth* quoted by the latter. Like Tirmidhī, Ibn 'Arabī mentions Abū Bakr and 'Umar as the foremost examples of the saints.

However, there are also notable differences. While analyzing the etymology of *nabī*, he suggests that this term is applicable also to the saints, although he does not actually apply it. Secondly, Tirmidhī's characteristic distinction between *muḥaddath* and *ṣiddīq*, *ḥadīth* and *ilhām* is not found in this treatise. Also his distinction between the *ahl al-jibāya* and the *ahl al-hidāya* is only hinted at briefly by the terms *murād* and *murīd*.

Ibn 'Arabī and Tirmidhī

Ibn 'Arabī's theory of sainthood differs from that of Tirmidhī in the following main points:

1. Ibn 'Arabī divides prophethood into the special, legislative and the general, absolute, and the latter is attributed also to the saints, while the former is only applied to the messengers.

2. In the Prophet, his sainthood is higher than his prophethood and messengership.

As mentioned before, these two characteristic doctrines are absent from his early treatise examined above. As for the first point, we have pointed out that Tirmidhī always distinguishes explicitly "the messenger," "the prophet," and "the saint." While the difference between the messenger and the other two is clear, the former being the bringer of the Law, the latter the followers of the Law, the cognitive difference between the prophet without law and the saint is not clear. Also in the early treatise of Ibn 'Arabī, he affirms the superiority of the prophets without law over the saints, although he recognizes the similarity between them in knowledge and station.

Once the principle of continuous revelation from God is accepted, it is difficult to maintain the distinction between prophets and saints. However, Tirmidhī and the early Ibn 'Arabī hesitate to apply the term "prophet" to the saints *tout court*, because in the Qur'an Muḥammad is called "the seal of the prophets," and in the *ḥadīth* he declares clearly that there is no prophet after him. To apply the term "prophet" to the saints infringes on the uniqueness of Muḥammad and the finality of his Law. This dilemma is partly due to the fact that in the Qur'an and the *ḥadīth*, messengers and prophets are generally not distinguished. Therefore once the messenger is defined as the receiver of the law and the prophet as the receiver of the general revelation without any specific law, it is necessary to establish the category, "the prophet with legislation," which is in reality identical with the messenger, to accomodate the indiscriminate use of "messenger" and "prophet" in the Qur'an and the *ḥadīth*. Then, it is easy to interpret "the seal of the prophets" in the Qur'an and "there is no prophet after

me" in the *ḥadīth* as referring to the prophet with legislation. In other words, what came to an end with Muḥammad is prophethood with legislation, that is, messengership, and not prophethood without legislation. To affirm the uniqueness of Muḥammad and the finality of his Law is one thing, and to call the saint "prophet" is another. Certainly, the saints are inferior to the Prophet, but are they really inferior to all other prophets before him? The Qur'an says, 'We preferred some prophets over others' (17/55,) and the Prophet himself said, "the knowers of my community are the prophets of the Israelites." This saying of Muḥammad is interpreted as referring to the general prophethood of which the saints can have their share. In this way, the ambiguous term "prophethood" is divided into the special, legislative prophethood which came to an end with Muḥammad and the general, absolute prophethood which continues to the Day of Resurrection, because there is no end of divine instruction for mankind.

I have already pointed out that this new doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī does not endanger the uniqueness of Muḥammad. On the contrary, Muḥammad is elevated to a position that the orthodox *'ulamā'* never imagined. He is not only the last and most perfect messenger, but also the most perfect saint. The finality of the Muḥammadan Law is also firmly guaranteed. The revelations the saints receive only confirm the Qur'an and disclose its deeper meanings. And also the saints after Muḥammad follow his Law. These points are again and again emphasized by Tirmidhī, and Ibn 'Arabī's new doctrine is not to challenge them. In fact, he repeats them with the same emphasis as Tirmidhī.

As for the superiority of sainthood over prophethood and messengership within the person of Muḥammad, it is expressed by Ibn 'Arabī in a highly circumspect manner. When he states it, he emphasizes that it

should not be taken as the superiority of saints over prophets and messengers. It is a comparison within one person. For the saints without the law are obviously inferior to the prophets with both sainthood and the law, that is, the messengers. Even when he compares sainthood, prophethood, and messengership as such, he places sainthood below prophethood and messengership, as does Tirmidhī. However, Ibn 'Arabī sometimes hints at the superiority of saints over messengers in two respects. The first is the story of Khadr and Moses in the Qur'an, and the second is the intermediacy of angels for the messenger as compared to direct revelations to the saint. But whenever these points are mentioned by Ibn 'Arabī, his language becomes obscure, and the superiority of saints over messengers is never explicitly stated. Nevertheless, it must be noted that even this kind of "hint" is not found in Tirmidhī.

So far we have not discussed Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of the seal of sainthood, therefore it is necessary here to deal with this doctrine briefly.¹⁷³ Basically, Ibn 'Arabī follows Tirmidhī in his concept of the seal of sainthood. In the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, the seal of sainthood is pre-existent in the same manner as the seal of messengership, Muḥammad, is pre-existent. All the saints receive their knowledge through him.¹⁷⁴ In *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya*, Ibn 'Arabī distinguishes two seals of sainthood: the seal of Muḥammadan sainthood and the seal of general sainthood.¹⁷⁵ The latter is Jesus, who comes at the end of the world as the *mahdī*. When he comes, he comes not as a prophet, but as a saint who follows the Law of Muḥammad. He is the last of the

¹⁷³Concerning Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of the seal of sainthood, see Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints*, pp. 145-179.

¹⁷⁴*Fuṣūṣ*, pp. 62-64.

¹⁷⁵*Futūḥāt*, 2:49; 5:195; *Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 3:174-177.

saints, and after him there will be no saint. This seal of general sainthood corresponds exactly to Tirmidhī's concept of the seal of the saints, although Tirmidhī never explicitly identifies him with Jesus.

The concept of the seal of Muḥammadan sainthood is more vague. The Muḥammadan saints are those who follow "the heart" of Muḥammad. Although he does not explicitly say so, they are the *afrād* discussed above. This seal exists in Ibn 'Arabī's time. And after him, there is no saint who follows "the heart" of Muḥammad. Sometimes Ibn 'Arabī claims that he himself is that seal.¹⁷⁶ Sometimes he says that he met this seal in Fez, although he does not disclose his name.¹⁷⁷

In both Tirmidhī and Ibn 'Arabī, the saints are contrasted with the conventional religious scholars (*'ulamā' al-rusūm*), especially jurists. The continuous revelation from God, and the spiritual interpretation of the Qur'an and the Law through direct inner experience are opposed to the rigid literalism of the orthodox *'ulamā'*. In this respect, theory of sainthood in Tirmidhī and Ibn 'Arabī has much in common with the theory of the Imamate in Shi'ism.¹⁷⁸ According to the latter, the Prophet is given both the outward (*ẓāhir*) knowledge, that is, the Qur'an and the Law, and the inward (*bātin*) knowledge, that is, the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the Law. Although the revelation of the outward knowledge came to an end with Muḥammad, the inward knowledge which is indispensable for the correct understanding of the Law is continuously revealed by God to the Imams. The knowledge which the Imams possess is infallible. Thus both the doctrine of sainthood in Ibn

¹⁷⁶*Futūḥāt*, (ed. Yahya) 4:71.

¹⁷⁷*Futūḥāt*, 2:49.

¹⁷⁸For the theory of Imamate in Shi'ism, especially in Isma'ilism, see Sami Nasib Makarem, *The Doctrine of the Ismailis* (Beirut, 1972); *idem.*, *The Political Doctrine of the Isma'ilis* (Delmar, 1977).

ʿArabī and Tirmidhī and the doctrine of the Imamate in Shiʿism emphasize the continuous divine revelation after Muḥammad, which teaches the inner meanings of the Law, without denying the superiority and uniqueness of Muḥammad and the finality of his Law. However, in Shiʿism this revelation is limited to the Imams, who are direct descendants of ʿAlī and Fāṭima, while in Tirmidhī and in Ibn ʿArabī, the possibility of receiving divine revelations is open to everybody. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the *abdāl* are called by Tirmidhī "the people of the house," and it is said that this term should not be interpreted as referring to blood relationship.¹⁷⁹ For Ibn ʿArabī, the saints are the only true heirs of the Prophet.

While Tirmidhī distinguishes the saints who are chosen by God and those who approach God with great efforts, Ibn ʿArabī does not draw the line so sharply. For him, general prophethood can be acquired, while legislative prophethood cannot.¹⁸⁰ The former can be acquired by supererogatory devotional acts. It is only through God's love as requital that the Sufis reach the station of proximity, as is expressed in the *ḥadīth* of the *qurb al-nawāfil*. People can receive various kinds of knowledge of God in accordance with their capacity and preparedness. As the forms in which He manifests Himself are infinite, so is there an infinite variety of saints' knowledge of God. However, only the perfect saints, the *afrād* who follow "the heart" of Muḥammad, can receive the totality of His manifestation by transforming their hearts in the same manner as the transformation of the heart of Muḥammad.

¹⁷⁹ *Khaṭm*, p. 345.

¹⁸⁰ *Futūḥāt*, 2:3.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

We have examined above the history of three motifs in Islamic thought. How can we distinguish Ibn 'Arabī's treatment of these motifs from those of Muslim thinkers before him? In the first place, he is most indebted to early Sufi tradition. This is most evident in the case of the first motif. It is only in Sufism that the *ḥadīth*, "God created Adam in His image" is interpreted as referring to Adam created in the Image of God. In theology, in which only the transcendence of God is emphasized, this interpretation is impossible. As for the second motif, although its origin can be found in philosophy, Ibn 'Arabī's emphasis on the metaphor of man as a kingdom with its ethical implications is without doubt derived from Sufi tradition. As for the theory of sainthood, it is Ḥakīm Tirmidhī who introduced this speculation into Islam, and here Ibn 'Arabī follows and develops the former's theory.

Within the tradition of Sufism, at first sight he is closer to the theoretical Sufism of Ḥakīm Tirmidhī and Ghazzālī, rather than the experiential, ecstatic Sufism of Ḥallāj and Rūzbihān Baqlī Shirāzī. However, the difference between Ibn 'Arabī and the latter type of Sufism lies mainly in the manner of expression. As has been shown by our analysis in the first chapter, Ibn 'Arabī's characteristic thought, that is, equal emphasis on the immanence and the transcendence of God, and the self-manifestation of God through His attributes and Names, can be found in Ḥallāj and more clearly in Rūzbihān Baqlī Shirāzī.

Also the identification of man and God is more strongly expressed by Ḥallāj and Rūzbihān Baqlī than by Ghazzālī.

Ghazzālī oscillates between cautious agnosticism motivated by theological considerations and Sufic "monism," based on intuitive "uncovering" (*kashf*.) His caution to keep a distance between God and man might be one of the reasons for Ghazzālī's unpopularity in later Sufism. However, the caution is necessary for him, because his style and language are not so different from those of theologians and philosophers. If Ghazzālī expressed in his clear style what Ḥallāj and Rūzbihān hinted at in their ambiguous, enigmatic style, he would certainly have had much trouble with conventional religious scholars.

The style Ibn ʿArabī uses is the middle way between that of Ghazzālī and that of Ḥallāj and Rūzbihān, as has been pointed out in the Introduction. His argument is highly technical and subtle, but not as poetical as that of Ḥallāj and Rūzbihān Baqlī. In spite of his elusive style, his position concerning the Image of God is clear: the image of God is the Divine Names and Attributes, and there is a three-fold correspondence between the Image of God, the universe, and man; the transcendence of the Essence of God is strongly affirmed, but the Divine Names are immanent in the universe and man. In this last point, he is different from Ghazzālī, who emphasizes repeatedly the unknowability of the Divine Names. Thus, Ibn ʿArabī was able to provide the metaphysical basis for the intuitive "uncovering" (*kashf*) of Ḥallāj and Rūzbihān Baqlī, something Ghazzālī was unable to do. That is why later Sufi thinkers chose to follow Ibn ʿArabī, not Ghazzālī.

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